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Dan McInturn

By M. H. HEDGES



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DAN MINTURN

DAY

The first far splendor of dawn. A shaft of light strikes the roofs of skyscrapers in Bankers Row. Sparrows in parks rustle in leafy branches of elm and oak. The swan afloat on the lagoon takes his beak from under his wing. Pigeons moaning hop down from manured window sills of the Chamber of Commerce in search of grain dropped by frenzied brokers. As a policeman emerges from the darkened zone of a notorious alley, the milkman begins his long rounds singing as he looks wonderingly at somnolent houses. A newsboy crawls from out a storebox and shivers in the damp warmth of spring. Clocks strike the hour dissonantly. While a physician speeds home from a delivery case, a young man leaves the gray doors of a house of assignation, as near the river a girl pauses to brush back a stray lock of hair before she leaps above the falls. First morning street cars emerge from dark, gaunt barns.

Alarm clocks clang. Groping hands muffle the blatant summons. Slaves of the machine turn restlessly in bed, yawn, arise and begin the work of civilization.

At five o'clock, gray-haired, beshawled scrub-women emerge from tenements along the river and stand in the damp twilight awaiting the street car. A half hour later they are on their knees on tile floors of skyscraper, restaurant and hotel, making walks clean for the print of ten o'clock suede boots.

At six, overalled, hob-nailed factory boys and men

with dinner pails take the car, while they talk stealthily about the last strike and the coming elections.

Seven. Reporters, editorial drudges, office boys, waitresses and grocery clerks pack the slow-moving yellow cars in the rush for desk and office. A half hour later, stenographers in lace stockings, suede pumps, georgette waists and picture hats, stamped with an air of distinction and poise that milady envies, begin their race to beat the boss down. Eight. Bank clerks, city employes, teachers begin the day's grind. Nine. Cashiers, lawyers, college professors, realtors, real estate agents, executive and automobile salesmen, in high-powered cars, form a procession preceding by half an hour the bevelled glass limousines of bank presidents and industrial heads. Ten. The vanguard of the day's shoppers—mothers with children, housewives with baskets, young matrons immaculate and seductive mount the street car steps and hang on straps in the fight for things, things, things.

Eleven-thirty. Milady, jewelled, fragrant with the suggestion of rosewater, in shimmering silks and summer ermine, alights from her roadster before the Avenue's most exclusive shops.

At last, the day begins.

BOOK ONE

DAN



CHAPTER I

ELECTION NIGHT

DANIEL MINTURN remembered the clutch and sway of that scene upon and through his emotions long after its outline and substance, its color, its blatancy and turmoil had faded out; the great composite crowd; exuberant, fickle, insatiable of amusement, blockading the street in front of the *Times* office staring at the luminous screen whereon the returns were flashed; the magic of his own name imprinted on that screen dragging after it unreal and amazing pluralities; hoarse incoherent shoutings and booings; the smell of frankfurters sizzling on a grill on wheels; a police patrol, intrusive and pompous, called to arrest two overzealous political disputants; a steady flow of limousines drifting past on an unfrequented by-street; calls of "extra, extra" from mercenary newsboys—these sharp impressions.

Somewhere behind these, cancelling sense of personal well-being and anticipated success, insistent questionings, at base of which was fear, about the crowd on election night, in the hour of its triumph. Only this last far away, almost unconscious.

These sights danced in his vision, blending with his sense of triumph, making him dizzy, intoxicated. His world—that aggregate of personal contacts which he called his world—was for an hour at least admirably arranged.

Details began to detach themselves from the blurred scene. A boy, a well-groomed, clean, untypical youngster of ten or twelve, suddenly set up a great hulla-

baloo, beneath his very ears: "Hurrah for Minturn. Three cheers for Representative Minturn." It was music to the ears. It was wine to the senses.

A costly gray car slipped itself almost in against the flank of the rippling human mass, and stopped close to Minturn. Within, he saw a man whom he recognized as old Senator Gaylard, his singularly smooth and old-womanish face, set upon an overfed body—a rather untypical fat boy, Dan thought. He was grimly enjoying the spectacle. Beside him, her face in shadow, was a girl. His daughter? Did old Gaylard have a daughter, or a mistress? . . .

Conscious of her, Minturn wished that the small boy might resume his huzzas again, but the lad refused to peep. . . . After a moment the car glided away.

Drunk to the full of crowd adulation, Minturn, too, dragged himself reluctantly from the crowd. He was confident and serene. To him, it seemed, as he walked rapidly toward the Nicollet car which was to take him home, he had for the first time, just begun to live.

§

Daniel Minturn was only twenty-six when he was named for the state legislature. The distinction and the responsibility had come to him, it seemed as he rolled along in the half empty street-car, by a fortuitous jumble of circumstances, quite outside his own fashioning. If old Representative Bort had not mixed the wrong medicine just before an X-ray examination, old Bort and not he would be receiving the plaudits of the election crowd. If old Bort hadn't—well, that was not quite all—if his own mother hadn't urged him to file, if Alice Miller hadn't campaigned for him, and if labor hadn't indorsed him. He knew that labor's indorsement was the toppling weight in the balance of forces. And

here he was, by no great effort of his own, a few speeches, a campaign expenditure of \$212.97, Representative Daniel Minturn of the 113th district. . . .

Across the aisle from him sat two girls immaculate as if they had just stepped out of their third floor rooms. Was it possible, he thought, as they eyed him, that they did not know he was Representative Minturn? He liked their young bodies so faultlessly attired and their free unflinching glances. . . .

Off Nicollet, on fashionable Pillsbury, as the car sped by, Minturn saw, under the arc's soft flame, houses suggestive of wealth, well-bred home life, and that other world, faraway, wholly outside his experience. The people whom his brother Hugh called the "dirty rich" lived there. . . . For the first time in his life, Daniel felt a subtle bond between that world and his. For the first time, he wanted to know something about that life, but with this wish came a vague stirring of guilt. . . . He quickly turned his attention to the two girls, and smothered the vague desire with recollection of his successful campaign. . . . He had written a pamphlet, which had set forth his views on child labor, cooperation, taxation of natural resources, tariff, control of public utilities. Copies of this work had been taken by Alice Miller from door to door throughout the district. She had loyally entered the premises of every voter, braving dogs and janitors, had rung each doorbell, and personally placed the "Platform of Daniel Minturn" in each housewife's hands. In this way, he had become known, well-thought-of, elected. . . .

But Alice Miller's self-asserted right to him? No, it was not that, it was her quick permissive smile and moist hands that were distasteful. . . .

As he approached lower Pillsbury Avenue, he knew that the family were up waiting for him. His father had been at work since he came home from the crematory plant at 5 o'clock. Burnishing up the old base

burner stove, he had got it into place in the small parlor, and had kindled a fire. The rose-glow of that stove fell upon the overstuffed parlor set, the old upright piano and Victrola, upon the old-fashioned standing clock, the three-legged table with its neat crocheted doilie, and over the small rocking chair where his mother was wont to sit after the evening work was done.

That stove dominated the room, yes, the whole house, and threw a glow, dim and quaint, over Daniel's inner self. As he stood, with wide open door for a moment on its threshold, he felt just as he had felt scores of times before, when as a boy he had returned from skating at Lake Calhoun, or from coasting at Lyndale Park—knew again the sharp pangs of hunger, the warm sense of security, the drowsy langour of the coveted nook behind the stove's great belly, where he was wont to lie as a lad, pretending that he was not asleep, reluctant to take the candle and go up to the unheated bedroom above.

It was not only the wistful sense of loss, induced by a departed boyhood never to return, that made him recognize confinement, barriers, as he stepped into the home of his mother and father. It was a subtler sense of balked desires and antagonistic personalities.

§

The little house on lower Pillsbury, in that district where the thoroughfare which begins so proudly with the homes of lumber and flour kings ends in commonness after it crosses teeming Lake Street, was built by Thomas Minturn himself, Dan's father. Thomas, dark, tall and thin, with a dense, close-cropped mustache, was slow in all his movements—in speech, too, in gesture and manner. His eyes, large and beautifully lashed, were dark and smouldering, yet submissive, even dog-like in their faltering gaze. When he spoke it was always with an effort.

Despite unprepossessing features, there was something in Thomas Minturn of patience, endurance, even geniality, an uncommunicated tenderness that one sometimes feels in huge and powerful dumb animals.

"Well, now, you must take what Tom Minturn says with a pinch of salt," his associates were wont to say. "He's pessimistic, you know."

Tom's pessimism was not voluble. He was not what Americans call a "calamity howler." It was not congenital. One saw in him traces of a large, almost extinct, good humor. The gloom that was his was the product of a thousand disappointments in himself, his fellows and his fortune.

Daniel had very early perceived the moral atmosphere that enveloped his father. The son resented it as a thing to be ashamed of, just as sons of other fathers have resented drunkenness. Tom's pessimism, the son irrationally felt, and irrationally fought as an affront to life. It lay an obstacle in his own way. It set a mortgage on his future. He saw it as a blemish almost physical.

Daniel remembered how one day, as a boy of twelve, he had wished to make a telegraph set for himself. Telegraphy was all the rage among his acquaintances, and several of them had costly outfits. Daniel had dreamed for days of the outfit that he should buy with the money he saved regularly out of his meager wages. Early morning, when he arose to follow his long paper route, he whiled the cold, dreary, dark distances with thoughts of this grand telegraph outfit. Finally, however, after weeks of slavish saving, when he came to his father to unfold his glorious plans, Old Tom merely grunted and said: "What then? You pay five or six dollars for them wheels, screws, wires and things, and when you put it together it is just so much trash. Money wasted. Plans always go to smash like that."

The boy did not let his father see him cry, but he

bared his heart to his mother. "I don't want father to be like that," he sobbed.

Tonight in the hour of his triumph, as Representative Minturn stepped into the familiar room, the presence of his father gloomily advanced to meet him.

His mother was different. She was tall and frail, a wiry woman, with a habit of enforced cheerfulness and periods of temperamental despair. Daniel could not remember when he had not felt a paternal solicitude for his mother. But mixed with this pity there was deep aversion—a kind of physical loathing. Mrs. Minturn had "spells." Some heart malady had afflicted her for years. Dan's earliest memories were of her lying back in a rocking chair, her straight hair disheveled, hanging about her perspiring face, her bare legs in a tub of hot water, her frail chest working like a bellows, while through her gasping mouth the air rushed in and out tortuously.

Her "spells" brought Dan very early face to face with death. On cold winter nights, as he lay on his straw mattress, in the upstairs room, he often heard his father moving about below, building a fire in the kitchen stove to heat water for mother. He could hear her gasping for breath. Every one of her struggles for life was his struggle. He lay in bed trembling, his heart pounding against his side as though he himself were dying.

He feared his mother. He feared she would die before his eyes. He feared that he would have to be near to succor as death seized and strangled her. All her sweetness, her generosity, her untutored wisdom, reached him somehow tinctured by this bitterness of fear. . . .

His father's slowness of speech, his inarticulate fineness, his mother's taciturnity cut Daniel off from his parents. If there had been fine moments in their love for each other, if there had been triumphs—and what life is so poor that it does not afford one hour crowded with latent memories—if there had been for these two,

holidays, laughter, gayety, Dan never knew it. As far back as he could remember his father had always been like this; a great heavy man with heavy passions, heavy sorrows, heavy hopes, and his mother had been a warrior fighting at odds against both life and death.

Thomas Minturn had been a migratory worker. He had labored in the harvest fields of North Dakota and Manitoba, the lumber camps of Canada and Washington, the hop fields of California and the mining camps of Colorado. Long before he had married Daniel's mother he had met a girl in a Canadian lumber town, loved her, and married her after the rough fashion of the frontier. They could not find rooms at the camp where Thomas was working, and so Thomas had taken her to the village four miles distant. Meadowbrook was a community of 800 self-righteous persons, guarded over by three churches, a Catholic, a Methodist and a Presbyterian. No one in Meadowbrook deemed a floating laborer a fit citizen, and when Thomas and his young bride came to live there, they could not find rooms. Finally in desperation, after walking the streets aimlessly, Thomas discovered by chance that the basement of the Catholic church was empty. He called on the priest, told him of his wife's condition, and succeeded in securing the cellar of the church for a home.

The three months that followed, as they waited for the birth of their baby, were months of anguish and ecstasy. No woman of the village called on the girl-wife. Every morning before daylight Tom tramped off to the woods. Every night at dark he returned. The day was a torture to him. The nights, as he and Sadie walked with their arms clasped round the other's body through the empty cold streets, were ecstasies.

Toward the last Sadie grew afraid, and lost confidence in herself. For three days Thomas stayed away from work, and when her hour came himself brought the physician and assisted in making the delivery. The boy was

born dead, and Sadie died three days later. Alone Thomas carried the rough casket, which he had bought empty, out among the stones and pines. Then one by one he lifted his loved ones in his arms and carried them thither. He said the only prayer he knew, adding words mixed with curses, and buried them in a shallow grave together. Then without saying a word to any citizen of Meadowbrook he turned his back upon the town, the lumber camp, and his sorrow, and went South to the states and the plains where there were no things to remind him of Sadie.

That episode in Tom's life remained locked within. When he married Emily Selkirk fifteen years later, he did not tell her of the other woman.

§

Robley Minturn, the oldest of the five Minturn children (there had been eight) had married a grass widow with one child, a boy, now 17 years old, Ralph. "Bob and his wife" was the way the Minturns had come to designate this branch of the family. Bob was a real estate agent, drove a gaudy car—when Ralph did not have it—was sentimental, good looking, with a reputation of a hustler. Maude, his wife, who was fond of signing herself Maude Ramsay Minturn, believed in not growing up. At 34, she bobbed her hair, wore a modified flapper costume, and was an open advocate of the single standard of morality. She had a small income of her own, and that, coupled with Bob's commissions, gave "Bob and his wife" wealth in the eyes of Tom and Emily. Though Bob was considered "tony" by Tom, the oldest boy had not wholly drifted away from the family hearth. It was the custom to bring the family together at Christmas, and perhaps once during the summer on a Lake Minnetonka excursion. Maude preferred to have no other relationships with her mother-in-law

save at these formal times. She frankly told her husband that she did not consider his mother clean. "She's slovenly, Bob, and you know it. Look at that kitchen, dirt accumulations of ages."

Maude always advised Bob to buy clothes for his mother, but he usually sent her gifts of food instead, and often drove up to the house to see her, visits about which he did not speak to Maude.

Bob considered his father radical. He could not understand why the old man, now that he had a good job with the city, should continue his rantings. The good job referred to was at the Municipal Power and Crematory Plant, where the accumulated garbage of the city—tons and tons of it—was disposed of twenty-four hours of the 365 days in a giant incinerator. Tom's job was to rake the packages of waste food out of the overhead car into the mouth of the furnace beneath. Tom often saw whole hams, fowls and loaves of bread roll out of the car into the fire, and the sight of the waste enraged him. A sharp, acrid, terrifying odor penetrated every section of the super-heated plant at all hours of the day and night. That smell ate into a man's being. It consumed self-respect.

Bob and Maude were congenial to Daniel Minturn. Bob was proud of Dan. He believed Dan had intellectual attainments quite beyond those of any member of the family. "Dan's just plain smart; that's what he is," Bob expressed it. Bob, therefore, considered his good judgment borne out when Dan ran for and was elected to the legislature. There was a bond between them. Dan found Maude diverting. The fact that Dan was her brother allowed Maude to talk frankly about subjects often called taboo between men and women. There was established thus a subtle link between them, which was derived from sex, but which was not illicit. Maude was as intriguing to Dan as a vaudeville show. He thought her plump, buoyant figure, her glossy hair, her

ears with their large jet ornaments, her well-massaged face and bright, roving eyes pretty if not elegant.

Lil Minturn, Dan's older sister, had married a keeper of a delicatessen shop in the south apartment region. Oscar Bloomquist, Lil's husband, was a small, energetic Swede, who was said to be "close" and making money. Lil was tall, thin and nagging; Oscar patient and anti-pathetic. Oscar had his great moments, however. These inhered in his avocation; that of spying on his neighbors. In a region where gin parties and jazz festivals were prevalent, his small shop became a reporting station, to which all the petty gossip about apartment house residents drifted.

Neither Lil, Oscar, nor Nell, the younger sister, 22, a stenographer, counted much in Dan's inner life. Nell was, to be sure, an intimate friend of Alice Miller. She worshipped Alice as a heroic figure and contrived to be with her as much as possible. Alice, Dan suspected, used Nell as an excuse to come to the house.

So it was that it was most of his brother Hugh that Dan thought, as he turned out of the sparkling, crisp November night into the familiar parlor of his mother's home following the election.

§

Was Hugh there?

One by one they came to congratulate him. His mother first, quietly, with a smile and with moist eyes.

"I knew you could do it, Dan," she said.

"Getting up in the world, aren't you, brud?" This from Bob.

"The honorable Daniel Minturn, ahem."

Maude said, looking mischievously at her husband: "Give us a kiss on that, Dan. Put it there." She pursed her red lips. Dan kissed her, and felt strong and very masculine.

"The fire feels good, pa," Dan said irrelevantly to hide his satisfaction in Maude's kiss.

"It ought to with coal at \$18 a ton," grumbled old Tom.

"Do you know, mother, as I came in just now, it was just like the old days when I was a kid, you know," Dan explained, turning expansively to Mrs. Minturn. She nodded vigorously, her dim eyes glowing.

"Well, Dan," Oscar Bloomquist said, stretching out his pudgy hand, "we were just going. Glad you're elected. Late for us, you know. Every morning for 18 years this key" (here he jerked from his pocket a large brass key) "has been in the store door just as the clocks were striking six. Some record, eh, bo? Good-night."

Lil pecked at his cheek with her lips as they passed out.

Alice and Hugh, Dan now saw, were in the dining room off of the small living room together. Alice came forward crisply, without show of excitement. She took his hand between her lean, red palms and said.

"The governorship next, Representative Minturn?"

"You don't want much," Dan answered, a trifle vexed, not knowing why.

Hugh came in.

"Hello, Dan."

"Hello, Hugh." That was all.

After that an awkward silence fell upon them. Old Tom took his chair, pulled up his newspaper about his face, and rattled it briskly. Dan made a show of warming himself at the fire, but concluded he was hungry. Instead of going to the kitchen, he sat down in his mother's chair next to the stove. He recalled that he had awakened early and had been on the go all day. He was tired. He wondered when Alice would go; if he would have to get up and go home with her. He was aware that the exaltation of spirit which he had first felt at the sight of the election crowd, which had stayed with him, was suddenly and mysteriously gone. He thought

of many obstacles in the path ahead. A sigh escaped him.

When he became aware of the family again, he saw Hugh standing before him looking stiff and odd. He looked at Hugh again. What was the matter with his brother? What could he mean? Was he going to say it here at this time?

Hugh: "Get up from that chair and let your mother sit down."

Dan: "Mother doesn't want to sit down."

Hugh: "Get up, I say."

Dan felt himself stiffen a little along his back. He blinked; he knew that he blinked.

Hugh: "Do you hear?"

Dan: "I heard you the first time. You don't have to shout. You are making a fool of yourself." His voice was sharp and persuasive, but it did not quaver.

Dan saw his mother make a gesture of dissent. His father put down his paper. Alice Miller set herself squarely upon her heels and waited. They all seemed strangely fascinated by the situation, galvanized into impotent spectators.

Hugh: "My God! do I have to say it again. Do I have to tell you what you are, as you come lording it home like a millionaire setting your fancy breeches in your old mother's chair, while she stands up. Do I have to tell ye."

This last was uttered in an ascending scale of anger and disgust. Dan felt himself laughing. It was so absurd. He knew that Hugh did not like him—ever since they had been kids together, but he had never acted this way before.

Hugh: "Laugh, God damn you! It's funny hain't it? All your fine ways, while your mother and your old man work their hands off for you!"

Hugh waited, as if for an answer. Dan did not know what to say. Hugh's evident passion, his belligerency,

perplexed Dan and made him instinctively afraid. He leaned back and turned his head away.

Hugh: "Yes, you are one of those fine fish; been to college, and all that; too smart to work like honest people; goin' to be Governor, goin' to hell. . . . Get up, I say."

Dan was trembling now.

Hugh: "Got any callouses on your hands? No. Got 'em on your back end, warming office chairs, practicing the law—practicing, practicing, but never really working at it, never really bringing in money to the old folks . . ."

"Oh, Hughie, stop; please stop." Dan saw his mother press her imploring hands over her ears and take a step forward.

Dan: "This has got to stop."

Hugh: "Oh, it does, does it? Get up, and it'll stop. Get up, I say."

Dan felt Hugh's fingers crawl along his collar, and then felt them tighten and jerk. Dan felt his head brought up sharply and painfully. He was glad for that attack. It relieved him by giving him a cue. He was larger than Hugh. He was bound that he would not get up—never, not for any soul alive.

Hugh bent himself to his task. He swayed. He tugged. He swore, but his brother sat stubbornly.

Dan saw the room dance in his gaze. Alice Miller for once did not know what to say. Maude Ramsay Minturn was looking meaningfully at Bob. Old Tom seemed half amused.

His mother was now weeping bitterly. She had sunk in a heap at Hugh's feet. Her hands were clasped impulsively at her breast.

Dan: "Stop, you stubborn fool; you're hurting mother." Hugh did not stop. He began more vigorously than ever to try to lift Dan from his seat.

Suddenly something seemed to break in Dan. A great

gale of anger swept through him and sapped his strength. In a moment he was on his feet, hitting out with right and left. He felt something pulpy against his right fist. . . .

His mother was saying: "Oh, Danny, you have hurt him now."

Dan saw Hugh lying quite white and still, his head against the back leg of the stove. Dan rejected the idea that Hugh was dead.

Hugh staggered to his feet. He was bleeding from a gash under his left eye. Dan saw the thin lips of his brother pull back from his white, sharp teeth. Hugh was smiling derisively.

"Might have known you wouldn't fight fair," he grumbled.

Maude Ramsay Minturn had her hat on. She and Bob were slipping out without a word. When they had gone, Dan watched Hugh go to the kitchen to wash his wound. He heard the pump wheeze.

"There, there, Dan," his mother was saying. "He'll be all right in a little while. Hugh works hard. He's kinda unstrung; he saw a man burned to death today. Moses Armstrong—you heard him talk of him. They went with the same girls. Go along to him after while, Danny. It's only a brothers' quarrel."

All his mother could do to minimize the strife could not belittle it in Dan's mind. It seemed peculiarly unfitting that it should happen on this night of all nights—and before Alice Miller. He felt humiliated, cheapened. More than that, some interior image of himself had been shattered. Though he did not recognize Hugh's charges as true, he had become aware violently of something in Hugh, therefore something in human nature, terrible and consuming that broke in on his dreams.

Alice Miller was now pretending that nothing had happened amiss. She was reminding Daniel that on Saturday afternoon he and she were going to Saint Paul

to the capitol, together to look over Dan's new scene of activity.

§

Dan kissed his mother goodnight and went up to his room. His room was one of two upper rooms of the cottage—up under the roof where the rain beat audibly on summer nights, and the snows of winter sometimes sifted through. He shared it with Hugh. They had been accustomed to sleep together until lately, when by mutual consent they had taken down the old spindle bed, piled it in the woodshed, and put up two army cots. The room was carefully divided between the two boys. Dan had put up a few pictures on his side, a cheap print of Lincoln, a good portrait of Mazzini, and a lithograph of a movie actress, a lovely, worldly face. Dan had about a score of books, mostly law texts, but a number of works in sociology, a few pamphlets of the Marxian school, and several novels; Wells and Sinclair dominated. He had improvised a desk out of a kitchen table, and had purchased an oil stove from which he absorbed enough heat on winter nights to keep him at work at his desk.

As he came into the tiny room tonight, through the low-ceilinged bedroom occupied by Nell, he thought only of Hugh. He was filled with an agony of self-pity and remorse, yet his mind was hard and obdurate. Perhaps, he thought, his mother was right. It was only a passing quarrel.

When he and Hugh were boys, he told himself, he once had struck Hugh with an open knife which he carried in his hand. He had used the knife as a pick, and had driven it down into the skull of his fleeing brother. As Hugh had howled in agony, and blood had oozed from the wound out over the yellow hair, Dan had burst into tears and had lifted his brother in his arms and carried him into the house. Hugh soon forgot

the incident, and allowed Dan to bathe the wound. . . . Tonight's misunderstanding was not like that. It was different. Dan glanced apprehensively toward Hugh's side of the room. His brother's sweaty soiled overalls were lying in a heap where he had dropped them. Hugh's dinner pail was lying on the crumpled clothes. . . . He would wait for Hugh.

His mind would not let go the thought that he had been treated unjustly by Hugh. He was not like that. He had gone only to a few night classes at the University. Most of the law which he had read had been read in George Kimberly's law office downtown.

"It's all a lie," he burst out under his breath.

He turned to his desk and busied himself with books. He heard Nell come up the uncarpeted stair and go to bed. He heard the creak of the straw mattress, and her quick, measured breathing. Hugh did not come up. Finally Dan went to bed and slept.

In the night he was awakened by the sound of his father's feet on the kitchen floor, and the splitting of wood. Between these sounds he heard his mother gasping and retching. She was ill again. He tossed restlessly. He was aware that while he slept there had stolen upon him again the sense of triumph and well-being which had accompanied the first news of his election. He was Representative Daniel Minturn. He arose and fumbled toward Hugh's cot. His groping fingers touched first the coverlet, then the dinner pail. The bed was empty. . . . He went to the closed window and looked out on the dim street, and up at the stars.

"Hugh's jealous; that's all," he thought. But this explanation did not bring him any real satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

THE BETROTHAL

THREE days had passed since the fight, and yet Hugh had not returned to his mother's house. Every morning following the quarrel, Dan had arisen early in the hope of seeing his brother in his accustomed chair in the kitchen where he ate—before leaving for the foundry—a hope too long deferred Dan now felt.

By common agreement, Dan and his mother declined to discuss the quarrel, and its painful invasion of the outward calm of the household. Dan concluded that his mother, like himself, hoped that Hugh would forget the hurts which had precipitated the fight, return and take his place in the nice relations of the family circle.

Dan busied himself with a speech that he had been asked to give before the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly on the use of injunctions in labor disputes. He was anxious to make an exhaustive study of the question from the early use of court orders until the day when the four Minneapolis labor leaders defied the law and went to jail, and so he was turning over many books in his room, at Kimberly's law office, and at the municipal library.

On Saturday morning, when he went down to breakfast, he saw that his mother had been crying. Under much questioning, she told him that Hugh had come for his clothes and was going to board at a neighbor's.

This was serious, Dan knew. Hugh's contribution of \$10 a week to the common family fund was absolutely necessary to maintain them in food and fuel. Nell was making only \$13 and was spending most of this sum

for clothes. By an arrangement with his mother, Dan was free to pay only a negligible sum—what he could conveniently spare from his scanty practice—until the Legislature convened in January. He saw at a glance that it was impossible for him to maintain his present relations with the family if Hugh left as he intended.

After eating a dish of oatmeal, and hurriedly drinking a cup of coffee, Dan took his hat and coat, said goodbye to his mother, and hastened down to Hornbloom & Glanz, proprietors of a large printing house, where he had once worked. He saw and talked with Mr. Hornbloom.

§

Soon after noon Dan went to meet Alice Miller. Alice clerked in the silk department of Donton's, and was off at 1 o'clock on Saturdays. Dan went to meet Alice with more eagerness than he was wont to feel in associations with her. He had formed a habit of relying upon her for advice, and he had found a certain satisfaction in confiding in her. In a moment of expansive feeling, during the campaign, he had once called her his "little campaign manager."

"I like to have you call me that, Danny," she had said and had rubbed her cheek against his shoulder. Dan, remembering her touch, now decided to be restrained in his relations with her.

Dan arrived at Donton's a few minutes before closing time. He never found it irksome to wait for Alice here. He liked to watch the pretty women move in and out of the revolving doors, and his senses were enthralled by the great array of goods so cunningly displayed against so dazzling a background.

Cross streams of women, women well groomed, with subtle aroma of romance emanating from them, women in rich furs, women in tailored garments of smart de-

sign accentuating every line of their supple bodies, women who released impressions of ease and culture, moved endlessly in and out of the doors. Occasionally he would catch the eye of some one of them. A quick, provocative quip of curled lash, penciled with dark, and she turned away. Dan, as he waited for Alice, sometimes allowed himself to follow the *femme l'inconnue* in his awakened imagination. He stepped with her into her brougham. He breathed the fragrant air of her garments. He alighted with her at some splendid house. He allowed himself to accompany her into her room, where she took down her lovely hair, donned negligee and showed him her purchases—intimate things that warmed him to brood upon.

Once Dan had been accosted by a store detective, as he stood near the entrance waiting. The fellow evidently took him for a pickpocket or a male shoplifter. This angered Dan, and it did more. It made him ashamed. It created within him an awe of the great store and its tormenting array of finery. It erected a barrier between him and the persons who came there.

Today he gazed into the mirror opposite with satisfaction. He did not look like a crook today, he thought. He had the distinction, at least the show of mastery, which Representative Minturn should have. He saw in the mirror a young man of unusual height, slender, almost too slender to seem robust, with broad shoulders, and gray eyes with something of a fanatic in them. An angular chin, dark heavy hair that fell in a shock over the forehead; a mouth, wide, mobile, capable of displaying passion.

Though clad in an ordinary store suit with a khaki shirt and a wilted tie the young man looked hard and strong, and carried the expression that crowds feel and pay homage to.

He strolled up and down the aisles trying to seem impersonal in his appreciative scrutiny of beads from Paris,

fans from Japan, and the hundreds of other precious things from the ports of the world. He wove a romantic net of meaning about the Oriental rugs, the English tea sets and German silver handbags.

He liked to "shop by eye." He was warmed as well as depressed by this modern bazaar so colorful, so luxurious. It made him want hungrily the things he saw. It awoke in him desires that he could not satisfy. He could not even conjecture ways by which he could satisfy these waking wants. He was fascinated and he was inarticulately pained.

When Alice found him at their usual rendezvous, he tried to tell her something of what he felt.

"It isn't much like Woolworth's," he said. "There one can go in with a dollar and feel like a millionaire. Here one can . . ." He let his out-turned palms tell the story.

"Don't you like the silks though, Dan," Alice exclaimed. "They're so shimmery, warm and womanish."

Dan searched her face. It was all aglow with feeling he had never seen before. Alice Miller had always seemed anemic and cold; now she looked full-blooded and pretty under the lash of her delight. For the moment, he toyed with the idea of taking her into his arms.

"It is all that I can do sometimes," she confessed, "to keep from burying my face in them as I sell them over the counter. Such colors like—like a colored waterfall. I love 'em when I know it's wrong to love them."

Slowly Alice relapsed into her brisk colorlessness; she faded out as a brilliant lamp is extinguished.

Dan considered getting to St. Paul. Should he suggest going by motorbus? His question was incisively answered for him by thought of Hugh. He decided that it would not be square to spend the extra quarter it would take.

Alice broke in upon his dilemma with tales of how girls at Donton's had been caught stealing silks; how

others could not resist the lure of them and took devious ways of getting them sometimes by acquiring friendships with floor walkers.

"It's all because they get such rotten pay, Dan," she asserted.

Dan nodded. He was thinking about the time when he would introduce an amendment to the minimum wage law at the legislative session in January.

§

They did not take a car at once. Alice wanted Dan to see "something," she said, on the seventh floor. So they climbed the long flights of iron stairs (the elevator had quit running) to what seemed to Dan were acres of furniture.

He followed her patiently from room to room, marvelling at the workings of her cool, female brain as she stopped to read price tags or measure the aesthetic value of some piece that attracted her. This excursion revealed a new side of Alice Miller.

To Dan, the seventh floor was an astounding parking place for unfamiliar and beautiful household articles. Tables with satiny tops and long, graceful legs like stems of wine glasses; davenport—he called them lounges—with deep, airy cushions, which invited to ease and comfort; lamps with voluptuous yellow shades and languorously dropping stands; deep, luxurious chairs which suggested fire-places, leisure and pipe-smoke and good talk, such scenes as Dan had glimpsed through windows as he walked home down Pillsbury Avenue of winter nights. Things with a magnetic pull on the emotions which stirred in him desire followed by frustration. He pretended that Alice was a "fool to rave" over these pieces of wood "made for the fat boys on Lowry Hill," but he acknowledged their power over his senses by his too patent show of aversion.

Stupid that he was, he did not see any application of this vicarious shopping to himself until she led him into the furnished cottage—the pattern home for lovers—Honeymoon Nest widely advertised by Donton's, a model from the porcelain bath room and white tile kitchen to the long, conventional living room done in glazed chintz. To Dan it was but a place cluttered up with pretty things that made him uncomfortable.

"Hain't it swell, Dan?" Alice exclaimed as they ventured to sit down on the davenport. She laid her hand softly and casually on his knee. "It don't cost so much."

She was looking up at him oddly, permissively. He swept her eager face with a glance; then he turned away to scan the crooked line of buildings that etched itself against the sky, framed in Donton's plate glass windows. Sensuous impressions of Alice, past associations with her came back to vex him in the moment of embarrassed silence.

She was always little Alice Miller to him. She was pale, with a thin braid of rope-colored hair screwed up in a tight knot on her sapient head. Clothes none too good, a plain white waist with a black ribbon at the throat, a black skirt that hung loosely about her thin hips and bony legs; a snub nose; washed-out blue eyes with wrinkles enclosing them; and crooked mouth showing prominent irregular teeth. A tireless ambitious Alice, who seemed to avenge her lot of eight hours toil a day by manufacturing a super-abundance of restless energy deadly when associated with brooding, peace-loving persons like Minturn. This was the Alice Miller whom he saw. There was nothing about her that suggested motherhood. There was nothing about her that suggested wifehood. She was—he groped for language—a fellow-worker.

How hard Alice had worked at the Northwest Knitting Works. How hard she had worked when she was

"rescued" from the factory by a woman's welfare organization, and given an "education" which she secretly despised for what she called "its class approach to her class." But when she had been offered a soft job which obligated her to go back into the knitting mill with the "torch of culture" for her former associates, she rebelled and quit. Now Donton's with its long hours and low pay.

When Dan turned back to her, her face had lost its look of expectancy.

"Hadn't we better be getting on?" he asked, rising vigorously, "it's a good hour to St. Paul."

She answered with alacrity: "Of course we had, Dan."

He was surprised and sorry for what had happened, surprised at the unexpected sentimentality in Alice, and sorry for himself.

§

Dan and Alice had never been in the State Capitol before. That discovery of the legislative halls together came nearer to waking in these two modern children of a realistic and cynical age the emotion commonly known as patriotism than any other moment in their lives. They could not be indifferent to the imperious building with its soft lines and golden dome. As they entered, though constraint had sprung up between them, the refreshing thought that this was Dan's place of business accompanied them. He was Representative Daniel Minturn. He had a right, a duty, to be there.

In the House, they examined intently the paintings of battle scenes on the walls, the Indian massacre at New Ulm, and the battle of Ta Ha Konty. They noted every detail. The flag-draped portrait of Lincoln above the speaker's desk; above the central doorway the inscription "Reason is the life of law." They felt that the

chamber was magnificent, but they did not allow it to awe them.

"Oh, Dan, wait a minute," Alice commanded. She mounted to the speaker's place and lifted the gavel. Then pointing it peremptorily in Dan's direction, she announced:

"Representative Minturn has the floor."

Dan arose to the occasion. "Mr. Speaker," he said, clearing his throat, and stepping forward in his best manner, "I rise to say that I approve of the sentiment written above our portal, 'Reason is the life of law.' I discern, Mr. Speaker, some empty niches in this hall. It seems reasonable that they be filled. I suggest that the bust of Eugene V. Debs, American patriot, be enshrined in the east niche now empty."

The diminutive speaker was hammering for order.

"Silence," she commanded. "Sergeant-at-arms conduct Representative Minturn to the hoosegow and there enchain him."

Their play broke up in laughter. They left the House, their constraint of an hour before dispelled.

After leaving the committee room, where Dan read the sententious inscription above the fireplace, "Free and fair discussion will ever be found the first friend of truth," with a cynical remark about "speech in chains," they went to the Senate Chamber for a moment, thence to the street.

They emerged into the slate twilight of a November day. They saw the cathedral dome across the jagged building line ballooned against the sunset sky, and the thronged streets flooded with the glow of lights. There was animation and stir before them. They turned homeward.

Alice said: "We'll take a bus, Dan. I'll pay this time. It is late and cold."

He allowed her to pay. They climbed into the car,

found a double seat well back where they spoke but little.

Dan occupied himself with watching the occupants of the car—mostly silent business persons, traveling men, a young lawyer with a brief case fresh from the chambers of the supreme court, a woman with dark, engaging eyes and a pretty face behind a veil toward whom Dan felt a long, slow attraction, several boys in bell-trousers and tight smart jackets, students, no doubt. Beyond, through the window, he saw the flaming electric signs on the huge manufacturing plants, past which they whirled as the motorbus swung into its ungainly speed—these broken by vistas of residence streets with their vigilant rows of lights. Dan, beholding them, thought of the home which he might sometimes have, and recalled not his own home, where Hugh dominated, or the model house which Alice had shown him that afternoon at Donton's, but the houses on Pillsbury, where there was luxury and refinement.

He now understood the fear under which he had been laboring all afternoon. He feared that Alice Miller wanted him to marry her. He observed her covertly where she sat thoughtfully beside him, a precise, matter-of-fact, energetic, oh, so pitiaibly energetic girl, and he decided on a defensive policy of coldness.

The bus did not take them near their neighborhood, and when they alighted in Minneapolis they found themselves in a cross-street blocks from home. They decided to walk. They talked about the past campaign and the coming legislative session. Alice forcibly discussed issues, conjectured outcomes, and suggested tactics and strategy for the minority to which Dan belonged. As the conversation progressed Dan became easier. It was over. He was safe, he thought, when without preliminaries Alice said:

"Danny, don't you think we can marry now? You

have a good position, your law practice will increase, and I can be a great help to you in politics."

He came near saying, "My God, no." He wondered if Alice had heard him gasp in amazement at her proposal. He was grateful, however, that she was as matter-of-fact in this business as in all things.

"I don't see how we can, Alice," he replied with conviction. "I haven't a cent. The legislature pays only while we are in session, and I doubt whether politics helps one toward the law. George Kimberly—he's the ablest lawyer in town—was telling me the other day that he was just beginning to make a decent living." He tried to be jovial. "We'd starve."

When she spoke he caught a note of wistfulness, of fettered disappointment in her voice.

"I'll go on working, Dan, just as now. I'm twenty-eight, and I can't go on waiting forever."

The unadulterated nerve of the creature—so his heart hooted at her. Where did she get that stuff about her waiting for him? Who asked her to wait? Dan was angry but baffled. He felt indignant at this piece of guile on Alice's part. So he tried guile in turn.

"Do you think that would make a home," he asked, "your working and all? You want more than that; it isn't fair to yourself."

"If it's babies you mean," she answered, "they can come later, when we get on."

He was silent. She dropped his hand which she had been holding child-fashion. What was he to do? He did not want to say "yes," he could not say "no." All his life he had been following the leadership of Alice Miller. He had allowed her as a pig-tailed kid in pinafores to do much of his thinking for him. In some dim way he saw that she was more than a friend; she was his mother and had been ever since he had ceased taking his mother's advice.

"Well, I'll tell you, Alice," he at last replied, "We'll

consider we are engaged; then in January when the legislature opens we'll talk about getting married."

Before they parted, at his gate, not hers, he added, "Alice, I am going to move out of here right away, and I am going back to work at Hornbloom & Glanz's. You see that is the only way to get Hugh back. You see I think mother wants it that way."

Alice thought the whole Hugh episode very sad, but she praised him for his good sense in clearing out.

As he turned into the house he wondered if he should have offered to kiss her.

CHAPTER III

SAXOPHONES AND CLARINETS

MRS. ERICKSON'S looked imposing in the heavy twilight of the late November day. The rickety steps, crumbling foundation, the unpainted walls were concealed under the romantic coloring of evening, while its shapely bulk and once-handsome appointments were still disclosed. Belle Tavern—as Mrs. Erickson's was officially called—was one of the few mansions of the last generation situated well-in, which had survived the march of the business section southward. It now served, as Ma Erickson herself said, as a "first-class boarding house."

Representative Daniel Minturn came home whistling. Silver and blue heavens, the quick, cold air, brisk crowds, lights, the towering office buildings, mysteriously lost in the upper areas of the sky, filled him with immeasurable satisfaction, not merely because of themselves, but because of the gypsy wish which had colored his existence all day.

He was due for a "bat," he told himself as he climbed four flights of the musty, dark stairs to the attic room. All day the blood had been pounding in his veins. He was filled with a delightful languor. He was warm with an immense vitality. More than usual, he noticed women as they passed him on the street. The machine-like routine of his work had been made durable by the promise of the evening.

He turned on the gas in the huge brass chandelier overhead, and began the formality of shaving by pour-

ing cold water in the tin wash basin and frisking a brush in it. He tried to whistle while he dexterously conducted the blade through three days' growth of beard. Finished, he took additional pains with his best suit, white shirt and flowered tie, not without wishing that he had new clothes for the coming session of the legislature

"There are smiles"—the captivating lilt of a dance song trailed through his clear brain. What he saw in the dim mirror, after his labors were over, gave him satisfaction. He was attractive—looked above his class. Before turning out the gas, he stopped for a moment before the portrait of Mazzini, which he had brought with him from his mother's house. It was his "act of prayer," this momentary gift of homage which he laid before the inexpensive print of the Italian philosopher-politician. Tonight he did not ponder Mazzini's democratic theory. He indulged in a diversion.

"Did you, Mr. Mazzini," he asked, "have affairs with women?" He went out whistling. On the third floor he ceased his noise. He did not want to bring fellows he knew out of their rooms to accost him.

Dan traveled alone. Unlike most of the young men, gang adventures had no attraction for him. Love and women as yet belonged with the reticences of life, like one's own thoughts about one's self, one's ambitions for power and prominence, not to be paraded in a cabaret, like prize cattle at a dairy show. Something in him compelled secrecy. He had more pleasure in going alone.

For years as desire swept fitfully through him, Dan had gone to dance halls—various ones—had fallen in with girls, danced long and violently, sometimes went, sometimes refused to escort them home, as the mood dictated. Having gone, having danced madly, he was satisfied, went home, resumed his work and his day dreams, until he was impelled by a secret inner wish to

seek excitement. Tonight he had chosen The Taborine, a place in St. Paul. . . .

The irresistible rhythm of Tango Stair's jazz orchestra ate its way into Dan's brain. Slowly it spread its languor over all his thoughts, flowing downward, to set life tingling along the spinal nerve ways. He felt refreshed, nimble, free, as though liquor had taken hold of him. Horns laughed, squealed wantonly; clarinets murmured, wept, pleaded, seduced caressingly; violins whispered languorously, or screamed like virgins calling; there were great claps of melody; there were wild smashes of discord; but always there was rhythm, the beat of passion, emotion, which invited him to skip, seek, frisk, to frolic. Always he longed for women—Woman—and never the same woman.

Sometimes it was for a little dainty girl no bigger than a child to clasp and cling impassively to him as he swayed—his great legs moving softly like twin sixes—through the dizzy steps. Sometimes his heart craved some skilled danseuse, who moved like part of himself through the dance maze. Sometimes he sought a girl as tall as he, athletic, almost male in her abandon, whirling with him, but dominating, directing, leading.

Always there was in the music the faint beginnings of power—then realization—immense dreams of success intermingled with love incongruously, grotesquely—the individual soul lost in the thrust and beat of mass emotion.

"Governor Minturn, Governor Minturn," the kettle drums rumbled.

At times, in the midst of the most joyous movements, an almost human moan from the saxophone, some interlude of pleading from a violin propelled through the hush of brass and wood-winds, some inadvertent chord of beauty, probed depths of unconscious feeling, and smote him with sudden sadness. Lurking in syncopa-

tion were notes uttering the very ache of life itself—tears.

Tango Stair was a round, fat little man with a red, coarse face—the envy of Dan. He played the violin ravishingly, and conducted his smashing, swaying, syncopating buddies, by eloquent jerkings and noddings of his little bullet head.

But it was to Nicola that Dan gave most of his admiration, Nicola, the star, the pet, of Tango Stair's Rainbow Bubbles. Nicola was an accordion player. He sat upon a camp stool well out in front of the others, his toes barely touching the floor. Nicola was a spectacle, a living symbol of the tunes he played, a totem for the civilization he represented. Making his body an instrument, too, he swayed back and forth in tune with the ragtime melody, while his legs and toes wriggled and frolicked beneath him. His face caught the spell of the ragtime blues. He wore a permanent smile, a smile that had in it the ecstatic vacancy of a child, or of a handsome idiot. Upon this boy's face Dan looked in fascination. Sometimes Nicola's face seemed to be the face of a girl overcome by passion. Sometimes Nicola seemed a kind of animate Buddha, the god of jazz himself. . . .

"Oh! sweet daddy." So the girl of Dan's choice greeted him tonight. She was slender and petite, with brick-red hair which she wore in puffs over the ears. There was a suggestion of languor, of curbed energy, in all her movements. She danced well, glided rather than sprang over the floor. Her face, Dan noted, was not over-painted. There was at times something wistful, sweet and even child-like about it.

Dan had the habit of hailing girls whom he met on these dance hall expeditions by a series of names until he hit upon the right one.

"Come on, Agnes, let's go," he would say, and in a

moment add, "Well, now, Arlene, how's the old engine hitting?"

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Tonight he exhausted his vocabulary in an effort to guess his partner's name.

"Call me 'say,'" she flung back derisively. "You're one of those smart guys from Minncapolis. Well, old dear, you'll never find out my name."

Round and round they went, her bare arms caressing his neck, her young breast heaving.

"All right, sweetie," he whispered.

To this she made no response. This nameless one, as with many another unknown girl whom Daniel had held in his arms, always somehow disappointed him on the emotional side. She was good to the eye, to the touch, his sense reached out toward her, but she was cold physically, uncommunicative, distant. As he beheld her like an animate doll in his arms, as he felt her strong legs press against his, and saw the glittering, unresponsive eye, the carmine lips, he felt thwarted, almost sad.

They danced, Bricktop and he, without rest, it seemed for hours. They seemed to him after a while, in his almost delirium, like one piece of finely oiled machinery.

"Machines? God!" he thought, "can't I get away from machines?"

His mental pain was broken by animation at the door. A new party was arriving.

"Cake-eaters from your berg," his partner informed him. "Let's catch a breath, and give them the once-over."

They halted. Dan turned and looked into the face of Ralph Minturn, his nephew. Ralph grinned sheepishly, but gave no further sign of recognition, as he took a girl in his arms and whirled off.

"Know him?" Dan's partner asked.

"He's my baby nephew."

"Got sense, anyway. Picks out a grandmother to chaperone him. Say, do you suppose he could forget gray hairs long enough to sling a leg with me?"

Dan felt a twinge, not so much of jealousy as of disappointment. He wanted her to feel about him as he felt about her; that is, romantically. He wanted her to find in his coming a stranger out of anonymity, a symbol of the eternal accident of love, as his dance hall expeditions seemed to him the reenactment of the primitive drama of male capturing female. He wanted her to accept him, marry him in the passion of the dance, then release him regretfully.

"Do you think she's very old?" he at last replied, unable to conceal that he was piqued.

She laughed a guarded sly little laugh.

"Only about thirty."

"Well, why break the old lady's heart? Leave her with the kid, and you come with me."

They floated away on a tumult of colorful song. As Bricktop clung to him, he felt triumphant, nearer to her than at any other hour of the evening. The evening was young yet, he told himself. It held unlimited possibilities for adventure, gayety, joy. He hummed a baritone to her contralto as their bodies slid down together, softly, oh! so softly, the flower-strewn rapids of syncopation.

At this point in the evening's career new arrivals again rustled in. Dan turned from watching the fat, dark-eyed girl with whom Ralph was traversing the "street of wax" to the entrance.

Suddenly Bricktop ceased dancing, dropped his hand abruptly and giggled.

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, "there's my steady."

Without ceremony she left him and dashed toward a tall, thin, sandy-haired young man who approached smiling.

Dan looked around to see if anyone noticed his dis-

comfiture. Relieved at finding that all the wriggling, swaying marionettes were indifferent to him, he made his way across the floor, and when his former dancing mate had lost herself in the crowd, slipped outdoors.

He was not satisfied. He felt bitterly that he had been cheated out of something life owed him. Over his consciousness a scum of displeasure floated, obscuring the memory of the first sharp pleasure he had had in finding Bricktop. He tasted the slow poison of feeling inferior. He was awkward, inept, unlovable, he told himself. With this sense of inferiority came a wild mania, a mood of desperation, the frustration of the young lover. He might have turned to the redlight district for solace, but he decided to go to a theatre.

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As he entered the charmed twilight of the balcony, he found that the show had started. He took a seat well front between—he was hardly conscious who—a girl and man. On the stage against an orange and black drop a brunette girl with bobbed hair, stockings that came to the knee, and an abbreviated fluffy skirt, was “throwing a wicked line.”

“We fellows will have to get together and get back our beer,” she drawled with a wise look. Her mouth was a slash of carmine, and when she smiled Dan liked the way her mouth widened unnaturally far back over her white teeth.

Her patter continued. “Say, boy, they’ll be taking our makin’s next.” She whipped out of her corsage a satin tobacco sack, drew a package of papers from somewhere, and dexterously rolled a cigarette. From a commissary concealed about her scant apparel came a cigarette holder and jewelled match-case. A spurt of flame and she was roguishly blowing smoke rings toward the audience. The orchestra set up a winsome two-step.

She was joined by a jaunty, sleek-haired boy in a stage tuxedo.

"Oh, Freddie, I am glad you have come," she drawled.

"No, I don't lend my razor," he retorted.

"Now, Freddie don't say that to your buddie," she pleaded. "Listen, Freddie, do you think mother will smell my breath?" She moved coquettishly toward him, pursed her red lips and lifted them temptingly up to him. "Do you, Freddie? Do you?" The boy stooped and kissed her. The audience howled. The orchestra resumed its rollicking air. The flapper and her sheik frisked to the wings. The audience beat their hands. She blew them kisses. The lights flashed off. The musicians changed tempo; a drop was lifted, and Dan was looking into a boudoir.

More persiflage from a blonde girl who was making her toilette at a dressing table with powder puff and lip-stick.

As the saxophones took up the dance theme, she stood up, divested herself of her dressing gown, stepped forth in camisole, and like thistle-down allowed the first strains of the orchestra to waft her across the stage. The music quickened; she leaped and whirled and eddied. She flung her lithe legs above her head; she careened; imaginary lovers wooed her; she swooned into their arms; on tip toe daintily, coquettishly she tripped, tripped, tripped to the syncopating tunes.

To Dan she was a dream of unending motion, color, romance. Again the scene changed—acrobats; again, magician; then the illuminated card read "Tyler and Lewis."

A screen dropped. A cinema projected song words on the screen—old songs of long ago, the continuity writer said. A man and woman in powdered wigs and in colonial costumes appeared, seated themselves front, and began beating out measured rhythms upon a banjo and guitar. As the melodies changed, the words changed

on the screen. "When You and I Were Young, Maggie," "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," "Love's Old Sweet Song." The audience sang. Dan found himself at first resisting, then groping for the airs, then giving himself with pleasure to the new sensation.

Suddenly he was aware of the girl beside him. He had not seen her, but her soprano was following his baritone. Her voice had quality. It struck a note deep within him. The dim lights, the music; exhilaration born of the crowd; his long-sustained emotions; the disappointment following the loss of his dancing partner at "The Tamborine" made the sudden realization that he and she, in all that crowd, had found each other and were singing together singularly romantic. He glanced at her. She was conscious of him. Her eyes met his and turned away. Her face was animate with feeling. She did not stop singing.

The long swooning cadence of an old ballad—it seemed as if just she and he were singing now, just he and she, he felt. He turned back to her. He could feel that she was feeling him, and more, that she knew that he felt her. She was very pretty, rather large, broad across shoulders, with broad brow, and appealing brown eyes wide apart. He was aware that she had that peculiar psychic power which he craved in women, which many prettier girls lacked. What should he do? Should he try to speak to her?

The song music ceased. Now the movie: a Canadian story of mounted police. It bored him.

The girl got up. He saw that she was alone. Her knees brushed his as she passed him, and he thought as her eyes rested for a moment in his line of vision that there was a fluttering moment of recognition. He trembled. He felt response in the pit of his stomach. He, too, got up and followed her out, groping for something to say. He had read in a novel how a man had said in accosting a girl, "Are you alone?" That salutation

seemed to him absurd. One could see that she was alone. When he reached the empty lobby, he saw that she had halted and had turned back to meet him. He said falteringly:

"You sing well."

"I like your voice."

"Wasn't it hot in there?"

"I'll say so," she answered.

"Which way do you go?"

"This." She took his arm. They said no more. But strangely the mood which the music had induced lingered in all its fragrance. They walked fast and purposefully, delightfully conscious of each other. They said little. Monosyllables.

"This way."

"What's your name?"

"Maude."

"Mine is Dan."

At length, they came to an old house with a broad verandah. He saw a bench upon the verandah, and when she asked him in, he suggested they sit outside. "Just for a minute. It isn't cold." She made no objection, but she was careful not to sit close to him. Dan recognized this as a crisis in his adventure. Breaking over his habit of shyness, he moved toward her and put his arm about her shoulders and drew her towards him. She let him kiss her first on the cheek then on the mouth. Her face was burning against his, while her hands which he fingered were cold. Maude was a novice in love. After the second kiss she tried to disentangle herself. She trembled in his arms.

Something awakened in Dan, eagerness, fire, a craving for more inexhaustible power over the dear creature in his arms. He struggled with her. He forced her to kiss him again and again.

"No, no," she whispered. "You mustn't."

He paid no heed. He was cool now, calculating.

Something in this girl had enkindled knowledge in him that he did not know he had.

"No," she pleaded. "Let's talk. Let's go into the house. What will you think of me?"

"I love you, Maude," he said. His lips were against hers as he said it.

Suddenly she ceased her struggles and lay panting and limp against him. His busy hand played along the contour of her body; it fell over her shoulder and lay naturally on her white bosom. He felt her tremble. Maude began to sob—long, uncontrollable paroxysms of nervous crying. Would she never stop?

"Don't! don't!" he whispered. "I'll stop."

"Oh, I can't!" she sobbed.

"Hush! they'll hear you."

"Oh-h-h-h!"

He was desperate. He could have choked her.

"You're a fool."

"I can't help it," she moaned.

There was sound of singing key in a lock; the door was flung open, and an old woman, framed in the dim doorway, stood peering out. Dan turned toward her, shamed, bitter, humiliated. He did not know what to say.

Maude spoke up. "Oh, Mrs. Smith, I am glad you came. I have one of those terrible headaches. I can hardly see. I don't know how I should ever have got home if this gentleman hadn't come with me."

"Poor child!" Mrs. Smith said, and stepped toward Maude and took her hand. "Was that you crying, dear child?"

"I just couldn't help it. It was such a relief to see the house when I was so sick."

Thus she lied. And thus it was that Dan saw her go into the house without so much as a word to him, and disappear, the spell that bound them broken.

Dan, as he groped down dim streets to the Minne-

apolis car line, for the second time felt defeated. To himself he seemed a bungler, an awkward, unattractive lout. The thought of his failure to dominate her will completely wounded him, kept him from feeling what the young male longs to feel himself—a man.

Hours afterward, as he lay under the roof of Belle Tavern, peace came back to him. He remembered the thrill he had experienced when he had for a moment possessed Maude's will. He remembered that not once in his six hours' absence had he thought of Alice Miller. He felt a great reservoir of power within himself—ability to give to the woman of his choice.

He got out of bed. He scratched a match and lit the gas jet. He stood before Mazzini, intently studying the face.

What he felt was great pride—pride in his power to feel, to love. Some day he would meet a woman, he told himself—an answerer.

CHAPTER IV

COSMOGONY

IT WAS inevitable in the two months that lay between election and the convening of the legislature that Dan, separated from his family, would find time for reading. And reading, and at times loafing, it was inevitable that he would gravitate to the bookshop of Abner Rakov—Rakov, Jew, Russian, ex-soap-boxer. Rakov exerted a devilish fascination over Dan. He was not much older in actual years, but he seemed to Dan senile when it came to experience. He had lived consumingly, was hedonist in all things, ate well, drank much, and had many mistresses. He retained, moreover, the heritage of a civilization far older than Dan's, which seemed to look out at one through his gray, hawk-like eyes, was framed by his thin, bluish lips, and sounded in his rich carping voice.

"You American radicals, bah! Bourgeois all of you. Feeble imitators of your masters," he would say over and over. "A nation of apes."

His smile was facile, slow, bewildering.

His bookshop—unnamed, usually called Rakov's—was located in the basement of a downtown office building. Only the initiate knew. Rakov made it pay by dealing in English translations of French romances printed in Quebec, and smuggled into the United States. First editions were not lacking, and he had an amazing knowledge and sincere regard for literature. On Rakov's shelves Dan made his first acquaintance with Havelock Ellis, Edward Carpenter, Arthur Machen, Remy de

Gourmont, Veblen and other social critics. But he went to the shop usually to hear Rakov's badinage.

"You know why you come here, hein?" Rakov said one day. "No, I'll tell you. You come here to hear me say the things you would like to say. Eh?"

He sucked rapturously at the cigarette which he had borrowed a moment before from Dan.

"Ancient peoples used to employ public mourners. You Americans keep public iconoclasts. While professing to hate them, you keep them, just as you keep prostitutes while pretending to be the pure nation of the world.

"Shaw has made a fortune merely by saying what you would like to say—if you dared. And there's that fellow Mencken. Eh?"

Rakov and Dan liked to leave the bookshop and walk into the milling district where the elevators lifted their gray beauty against the sky, and the river, turbulent and youthful, swept away beneath the old arch bridge, past the university campus, toward St. Paul. Rakov not unconscious of the energy palpitating in the scene, could only think of its accidental beauty, while Dan saw it as an idyl of labor. Here the mills grinding flour. Yonder the prairie undulating with grain, the farmer at plow and reaper. And beyond, the hungry mouths of children in New York or Moscow.

"Those damn electric signs," Rakov commented for the tenth time, as he noted the insistent announcements of the millers.

"And the old Centennial building. Righto. The building with the greatest architectural merit in the Twin Cities, and a historical landmark besides, made to house a mail order business. Righto."

Sometimes they penetrated to the maze of tracks that stretched out behind the Union Station, with the same zest that wanderers in sea towns find themselves seeking dock and wharf.

§

When Dan slowly awoke on the morning following the affair with Maude, he found the old dream of crowds insistently filling his mind. It was often there as he lay between sleep and waking. City streets—crowds. Bizarre cities, Cairo, Calcutta, Moscow—crowds. Cities which he had never seen were often in his mind, and the people that inhabited them. It was a dream that had recurred since boyhood. To his waking self it had little meaning. He did not know that it derived from a sentiment within himself that lay at the core of his nature. That was what made his essentially an amiable nature beneath rather stern exterior. That was what made him tolerant of Negroes and Jews when his fellows cursed them. That was what made him an evolutionist. Like so many of his class Dan had transferred allegiance to an abstract other world to this very concrete planet. He was haunted by the sense of the solidarity of the human family.

When he tried to speak about this thing to Abner, he was met with derision.

"Families, ye gods!" Rakov bellowed. "All like yours. Yours is typical. You and Hugh at each other's throats. Don't use the family as a symbol, use the social club, the Minneapolis Country Club, where one kind flock together and are mutually tolerant of each other's vaporings."

Everywhere that Dan went he heard talk of government. There was a young reporter on the *Daily Telegram* who was a confirmed Marxianist. He worshipped Lenin as the embodiment of an ideal of abstract power, relentless, impersonal, just.

"Revolutions are not made," the apostle of Saint Marx often declared, "they arrive like gestation, an inevitable stage in a social process."

There was that group of "labor boys" that centered in

the *Labor Unionist*, who were interested in "amalgamation as the next step in industrial democracy."

Everywhere new ideas about men's relations to each other in factories, shops, councils—until it seemed to Dan that all that existed of importance in his generation was this constant flow of discussion about government, and this endless stream of things to be bought and sold, train loads, ship loads, truck loads of rings, furs, rugs, watches, silks.

One day he picked up a review of a book by H. G. Wells in the office of the *Labor Unionist*—he did not often read reviews—and he smiled to find the critic saying, "Wells' characters are notably unreal. They chatter ceaselessly about government, and where will you find a half dozen men who, brought together, will talk about government. They speak about business, love, the Republican Party, but never about government." The review seemed unjust to Dan. Sex, it was true, was elbowing government off the stage. It was easy to talk about sex. There was Galvin who told him the other day quite frankly and impersonally that his wife, since turning theosophist, had come to think of the embrace as unclean. But generally even Galvin was discussing government.

Dan craved intellectual and passionate glimpses beyond the political, and no doubt this is why he turned to Rakov. Rakov, since forsaking the role of soap boxer, detested all reference to politics. His mind, with its strange unearthly gleams, illuminated certain segments of truth. It played over fundamentals with a phosphorescent unreal light, to be sure, but it played over them. Despite the fact that Dan never believed, from the core of his nature, a word Rakov said, yet he came back fascinated. Rakov's very spirit of negation made Dan conscious of his affirming self. And quite by natural ways, he learned the secret of the pull of opposites upon each other.

§

So as they hung over the open book-cases filled with second-hand classics in Rakov's underground library, or tramped the mill district, or watched the long train hop off on its over-continent journey, Rakov talked and Dan listened.

"Now I ask you," he demanded, "to wash your mind clean of all pre-judgments, your prejudices, what you inherited from the Baptist Sunday School, what you call scissor-bill ideas. Can you? You think you can.

"Then I request you to cease floundering in the modern intellectual chaos. Stop struggling. Think.

"Accept Remy de Gourmont's premise that men are but envelopes created to enclose the sex organs, the sperm and ovule. Note that these sex entities are always in a state of search and preparation—never at rest—seeking.

"Understand that man's mental life is but a reflected function of these sex organs. That accounts for his restlessness—ceaseless outreaching.

"Man's life, Minturn, your life, my life, is a constant battle against quiescence, against being bored. We are interminable seekers after motives, something to propel us beyond peace.

"We lie when we say we want peace. We don't. We want activity, excitement, violence. Hence war, hence jazz, hence intrigue, hence crime, hence our endless whimperings against fate when we fail to become impregnated with desire.

"Sex is the usual, most natural motive power. When it fails the roué, he blows his brains out. Hence the dangerous age, when woman no longer feels its goad, or only begins to feel it. Hence youth, when first awakened, feels immense new-found energies swell within him, and beholds the path widening out, out to some strange, mystical horizon, which he calls eternity. He

experiences the joy of being motivated, propelled—his natural state. Perhaps the gas wagon and the gas ship are but the ends of this driving restlessness, this wish to be impelled.

"Ah, you say, I make too much of this. It is what we are underneath, and that is all that counts."

When Dan felt constrained to rebel, and would say, "There must be the peace that comes after the struggle?"

"Death," you mean, "the no-struggle?" Rakov would reply.

"Listen, Minturn"—a strange fellow this Rakov, with his weird, bluish face, ascetic despite marks of debauchery written deep upon it. Dan could often imagine the curly, black hair surmounted with a turban, the thin tall figure clad in colored robes. The prophet out of the East, standing on a bridge over the Mississippi while the thunder of traffic rolled about him.

"Listen, Minturn, I shall tell your fortune." He smiled whimsically and took Dan's hand, and studied it silently.

"Young man, you are yet unimpelled, that is, you do not yet know yourself. Beware of women, beautiful, cold, cruel women, see?"

He laughed that odd, receding laugh of his, which was so colorless, mirthless.

§

The first snow came toward Thanksgiving, a beautiful steely snow that spread its silence over the city. Stirring the sluggish spirit of a late autumn, it brought children shouting out of doors.

Skiis were brought from attics. Snow-shoes were donned. A festive mood seized the shoppers in downtown streets. Store windows transformed themselves into old-fashioned toy shops, with inevitable stirring of childhood memories in adults; the streets began to be

filled with women in sealskin coats and flapping Russian boots, sleighing parties filled the streets with song. So Minneapolis, the northwest metropolis, took on its glittering northern look.

A poet might have figured the city as a Viking girl, rugged, apple-cheeked, athletic, with skis or ice-boat, but to Dan the snow brought just two ideas: First, "Golly, this will mean jobs for just about two hundred men;" second, "That attic room will be hard to heat."

That was not quite all. He did not miss the appeal of the first storm. After supper, he took to the streets, made a turn through the shopping district, appraising again with his eye the gorgeous contents of the show-windows, and finally found himself in Loring Park where the snow flakes fell murmuringly upon sere leaves, and the winds stirred a low song in the branches of the oaks. Here he sat down a moment on a bench, not without bewildered sense that it was only yesterday that he had watched the swans sail the lagoons, where now only globules of light blurred their surface. . . . Attracted by the imposing bulk of the Pro-Cathedral before him, he took to the streets again, crossed Hennepin, mounted the church's steps and went in.

The great, white nave was filled with silence—and bowed figures. Dan paused for a moment at the door, stared curiously at the crucifix, the candled altar—and went out.

It impressed him, that is, the people bowed there impressed him. They stirred him as crowds always stirred him, be it the crowd he was addressing, or throngs in the streets. This was the first time in his life that he had ever seen a crowd in prayer.

What happened to Dan in that moment, a more self-conscious man might have called an experience. To Dan it was only "food for thought." It made him recall Abner Rakov and his vision of life as a search for motives. And it came to him as he stood in the Park,

whither he had again drifted, that Abner had omitted from his analysis of men's souls the sense of responsibility to somebody—something.

It was a sense of responsibility to his mother that had made himself leave his mother's roof. It was the same troublesome sense of responsibility to Alice Miller that had trapped him into an engagement with her. It was this sense of responsibility to his brother, Hugh, which made him feel regret for the unhappy outcome of their quarrel.

He took his cap, and brushed the snow off a park bench, and seated himself. It amused him to pursue his thoughts about responsibility as far as they would go—to the voters—to society—to—and so on.

His musing led him to a dilemma. What kind of a person would he become, he asked himself, if he should quit his job, resign from the legislature, and devote himself, like a priest, to books, candle-lit churches, and to thoughts about responsibility. He smiled.

He got up after a few minutes, and went to a movie. Those elevated thoughts which had brushed his consciousness did not recur again that night, or the next day—not until long after. He was back at the stone and type-case busy with commonplaces, filling in odd moments with thoughts about his speech on the use of injunctions in labor disputes.

CHAPTER V

CHRISTMAS

ALICE Miller did not obtrude on Dan. He saw her now and then as he went home to see his mother. She was like that—like a wife before she had become one, he cynically declared. There was something very impersonal about Alice despite her intense partisanship. She had no lustre, little individuality. She shone brightest as part of the mass, not as a person in her own right. This fact about her he sensed and it troubled him.

He was not happy at Hornbloom & Glanz's. He found his mind turning steadily away from his job toward his new work as a legislator. He was irked by toil. He found picking up leaden cubes and fitting them into a stick so that they spelt words which another man had written irksome in the extreme. Had he ever found printing a pleasure? He did not know. He fell to thinking often of men who worked in the mills, on the street cars, in the ore mines; of his father at the garbage plant, of his sister at the typewriter, and he felt a sudden leap of his blood, and he knew a rush of exultation that he was not condemned to this slavery forever. He saw a door to freedom.

About this time, when he delivered his address on the use of injunctions he experienced another triumph. Crowds stimulated Dan. He stood up before the multitude of individuals and he found the many coalescing into another entity; and this other thing that was not these individuals pumped its energy into him and made him speak boldly about things of which he was really afraid, calmly about things that in solitude troubled

him, and rashly about things that of themselves demanded deliberation. This thing was really his master. After two hours of fluent speech he stepped from the platform glowing, more refreshed than when he had begun.

But the next day, when he scanned the newspapers he found that they were attributing ideas to him which he thought he had not uttered. When these were snatched from their content, and detached from the occasion they looked unbecoming an attorney. One paper editorially branded him a seditionist. By this address Dan won state-wide notoriety. On the other hand labor papers were speaking of him as "gubernatorial timber."

After a time the whirlwind subsided. The days poured on irrevocably and the temperament which colored his existence regained ascendancy. There were other excursions to The Tamborine in the hope of meeting Bricktop. He yearned to regain control of her will. His quest was futile. He found himself carrying on imaginary debates with Rakov on the ever-fruitful subject of boredom. He took to reading voraciously and aimlessly.

He was glad, therefore, when Nell walked into his attic room one night to invite him home for Christmas. It had all been "fixed up" with Hugh, she told him, and the family was to be reunited once more.

"Hain't Christmas fun, Dan?" she lingered to say. "It is like being a kiddie all over again."

He felt the old clutch of make-believe at the door of his imagination.

"It's just like a picture of a winter-garden I once saw somewhere," he answered. "All white with snow, and green with pine trees covered with great red cones."

They talked longer principally about "mother's health" and "how well father held up." They were groping to get back on common ground which both had lost, and which both needed to sustain them against an overshadowing estrangement.

He noticed that Nell was not good-looking; that her nails were kept short by her teeth; and that her face was blotched and pimply. This was the first time that he had seen her away from the household where he could scrutinize her as he would any other girl. He found her unattractive. The discovery made him awkward and silent.

Finally with a silly laugh, his sister said, "Al will be there Christmas day. I want you to see him. He's going to be your new brother."

"That's nice," he answered, trying to enter into the magnitude of the event as a brother should. "But I thought his name was Harry."

"Aw Harry. His mother got grumpy and I gave him the air. Al is nicer and he makes more money."

Al, she went on to tell him, was a clerk in a jewelry store, making \$20 a week with a chance for a raise.

§

It was usually left to old Tom to get the Christmas tree for the family. In other years he had gone to a farmer that he knew, bought the balsam where it stood, felled it, and trundled it home as best he could. This year he had rheumatism in his shoulder, and chose to buy it from a Lake Street vendor. Trees were expensive. He picked the best of the seventy-five-cent ones he could find. It was not very tall, and the branches were scraggly, but it was a tree.

When Christmas eve came Mother Minturn popped the corn on the kitchen range. Nell and Lil, who had run over from the store with a pocketful of cranberries, strung the glittering white kernels and the crimson berries on chains, while Dan arranged these in the fragrant branches. The tea kettle on the stove began to sing. Old Tom's paper rustled where he sat by the stove neglecting his office as fireman. There was a heavy frag-

rance of toasting corn and pine needles, and the cat purred comfortably in the old chair, the one which was patched neatly with a piece of ingrain carpet.

The children shared reminiscences about other Christmases far past. Lil told how she once watched for Santa Claus. Nell recalled a sled which had come to Dan which she coveted. Dan related how he "played like" he still believed in Santa Claus long after he had been disillusioned by the "hard-boiled kids in the neighborhood." The evening passed swiftly. At length the tree, with its defects in symmetry well hidden, stood forth, a glittering symbol of the Christmas spirit, clad in other splendor than that which the poor home-made trappings lent it, for each saw it through the recovered eyes of childhood.

"It's a beauty."

"We never had a better one."

"Hain't we got fun?"

So the three grown children frolicked while Mother Minturn looked on with misty eyes, and Old Tom pretended he did not hear.

When the last touch had been given to the tree, and each had brought his gifts and secreted them in its branches, Mother Minturn drew Dan apart.

"Danny," she whispered, her hands patting his shoulders, "You are going to stay here tonight."

It was the first reference—however vague—to Hugh.

"Why, no, mother," he insisted. "I can go back to my room."

"Now, Danny, listen," she implored, her old hands fluttering at his necktie. "This is Christmas, hain't it? And Christmas for me is having all you babies at home. . . . Oh, Danny, you don't know how it is here, to wake up at night and suddenly realize that you are gone—not in your bed upstairs."

"Yes, yes, mother." He felt how frail her body was as it leaned against him.

She spoke reluctantly. "Danny, you won't be distant to your old mother, will you, when you get to St. Paul?"

"No, no, silly mamma. How could I? Have I ever?"

He promised to stay overnight, to sleep in the upstairs room which he had known as his since memory began. . . .

Nell came to tell him that he was wanted at the telephone. It was Andrew Andrewson, his colleague, reminding him of a meeting of the Hennepin County legislative delegation on the day after Christmas.

As he hung up the receiver there was a tightening of his nerves. He recalled with satisfaction that he was a member of the Legislature, a participant in important affairs. He exulted.

He could not go to bed now. He got his hat and coat and drifted out into the still street. The skies were blue—distant—gleaming as if illuminated at a million windows. The air was sharp. It suggested festivals. He moved toward Lake Street. Here the crowds were thinning. He went on down Pillsbury Avenue. The houses were silent but animate. They seemed friendly. In bright patches of firelight he saw through windows holly-wreathed, brilliant trees and happy faces. He went on—pleased with himself—hardly conscious that these bright squares of light, the long purple shadows on the snow, the joyous Yule scenes were anything apart from his reverie. As he progressed the houses grew larger. There was one larger than the rest, set well back on a hill, to which at length he came. It was surrounded by a wall. The wall challenged Dan remotely. He found an iron gate at the driveway. It opened at his touch. He went up the driveway, curious. He stopped under a tree near the bay window. The room he looked into was long and ornate. It culminated in a sun-room, where a gorgeous Christmas tree glowed. Before an open fire sat an old man. Dan saw his face. He recog-

nized Senator Matt Gaylard. The discovery amused Dan. He lingered. In a moment a girl came into the room bearing a holly wreath. The same girl he had seen with Gaylard on election night. She was of good height, of great dignity, of unmistakable beauty, with a wealth of reddish hair. She laid the holly wreaths down, and Dan saw that she held a spray of mistletoe in her hand. Glancing toward the old man, who drowsed in his chair, she held the mistletoe above her own head, and smiled faintly.

Guiltily, Dan sauntered away.

When Dan awoke on Christmas morning, the first object his glance fell upon was Hugh's cot—unused. He pulled on his trousers, and hurried downstairs to dress by the fire, as he had always done as a boy. As he passed through his sister's room he could see Nell still asleep. He noted the streaks of rouge on her pallid cheeks. Downstairs he found the coal fire out. Tom was kindling a fresh blaze. So, shivering, Dan hurried to the kitchen to complete his toilet over the kitchen range, while Mother Minturn plucked the feathers from two chickens. An odor from scalded feathers of painful intensity filled the room.

About eight o'clock Lil came over bringing her share of the Christmas dinner. She was tear-stained and breathless. She wore a soiled lace boudoir cap, and looked as if she had not washed. She laid the cranberries, spaghetti and potatoes on the table, and sat down and began to cry—and to scold as she sobbed.

- "Oh, ma, Oscar is the darnedest penny-pincher that God ever gave a woman for a husband. He won't close that store on Christmas day. Would you believe it? He's a slave. He can't go to church. He can't go to a movie. He can't even go to the bathroom without worrying about his darn old business.

"I get sick of it. It hain't that he has to work so hard anymore. He's stingy. That's what he is. You know

what he gave me for Christmas—a percolator, one of the premiums with XYZ coffee. He got it out of the store, and me who never had a silk dress in my life.

"He says he can't be here till 1:30. He's going to keep open till one o'clock. 'Fraid he'll lose a nickel. My God! I get so sick of this store business sometimes I could burn the whole damn she-bang down about his ears."

Mrs. Minturn looked up wearily from over the dish-pan into which she was dropping the steaming plumage of the hen.

"Yes, Lil, but Oscar makes a good living for you, and he's a good husband."

Lil sniffed.

"He hasn't got the guts to go with some other woman, if that is what you mean. He's afraid it might hurt his business."

She cried profusely.

When Maude Ramsay Minturn came in an hour later the behind-the-scenes atmosphere in the household was dispelled. Lil had tidied up, and was cooking her share of the dinner over one-half the range. Nell had come down in her best dress and was preparing breakfast. Maude somehow always aided family morale by forcing the others to put up a certain pretence to conceal rifts in the family organization.

Dan did not fail to respond to the look of conscious well being and sophisticated charm of his sister-in-law. Maude wore a tan jersey suit, quite plain, that needed no other embellishment than her own attractive figure. Her hair, like a skein of glossy black yarn, was caught and held by a blue barette; her skin, beneath the rouge, looked firm and healthy; her whole person emanated vigor and warmth. Dan's eyes followed her movements about the room, until Maude, conscious of the unformulated question there, turned to him and smiled.

"What is it, Danny? Do you like my new suit?"

He told her he liked it and smiled other unspoken things.

"Why, Danny, you have naughty eyes sometimes. I bet you are goofing that little Alice Miller."

Dan looked round stealthily to see if Lil or Nell had heard, and being assured that he was quite alone with Maude, said:

"You can cut that talk, Maude. But it's a relief to see a woman round here that knows how to wear clothes. You're pretty and you know it, Maude."

He felt very masculine as he made the declaration. The compliment seemed bolder than it was.

She smiled appreciation. "And it is sweet of you to see it, Danny," she said, and patted his cheek. "But just look at those shoes will you?"

She pulled back her skirt to show him her brown suede pumps splattered with mud.

"I had to walk over. Son had the car." She brushed vigorously at her shoes with her handkerchief. "Danny," she went on, "I'm worried about son."

Dan recalled the last time he had seen Ralph amid the dancers at The Tamborine. He couldn't say that he shared Maude's fears, so he said nothing. Maude sat down, crossed her legs, and grew maternal and confidential.

"I'm afraid he drinks. I've never smelt it on him, but I've found stains on his lapel that look like liquor stains. And he's out late. I'm afraid there's a woman—not a girl, mind you, but a woman—some designing woman who has her eye on my little boy."

Dan smiled inwardly. The plump, good-natured girl whom Ralph escorted about The Tamborine floor did not look much like the modern vampire—the approved model.

"I don't believe so, Maude."

"What do you know? You know something. Tell me quick," she demanded.

"I don't know anything. Ralph's got good sense, I guess."

"Listen, Dan! He wasn't home last night. About 8 o'clock he told Bob that he was going to the Lyceum to see that Irene Castle picture. He took the car. We went to bed. You know what a sleeper Bob is. You couldn't wake him with a ton of brick.

"About midnight I was awake, just like that," she explained, snapping her fingers. "Wide awake. After a while I got up and went to Ralph's room. It was empty. I sat down, and waited. He didn't come. After a time I got scared, afraid Bob would miss me, and I went back to bed. I never slept a wink. One o'clock, two, three. At five I could stand it no longer. I thought I should die. I got up again. Perhaps, I thought, I had dozed off, and didn't hear him come in. But his bed had not been touched."

Tears were running down Maude's cheeks. She found a powder puff, and repaired the damage to her complexion.

"Not a word to Bob," she commanded. "I'll explain it somehow."

By the time Oscar Bloomquist appeared at one-thirty the dinner party at Minturn's had assembled save for Ralph and Hugh. Alice Miller had come in casually as a member of the family. After greeting Dan she and Nell went to help in the kitchen. Shortly before the arrival of Oscar, Nell's swain, Al Erickson, came in. He was tall, sallow and thin, with an air of assurance which struck Dan somehow as incompatible with his faded-out personality. Nell introduced him by saying "This is Al, Dan;" "This is Al, Alice," and then went back to the kitchen and left Al to fare as best he could with the male members of the family. Bob Minturn had come in with a shout, and an armful of bundles. Bob had discovered that Ralph had made off with the family car

and swore good-naturedly that he would have the law on the youngster by night if he didn't show up, with the machine whole, and himself sound in mind and body.

Now the company got keyed up to the idea of dinner. The repast was the main event of the day. Other than the rough salutations and the joking there was no intercourse between the members of the family. The dinner held them together as a bond. It was the sole symbol of that hidden net of relationships—the tissue of memories and shared experiences—which knitted them into one family. The breath of expectancy which rustled through the house served to mask the fear which also began to show itself that two guests were likely to be late. This was an unpardonable misdemeanor at Min-turn's on Christmas Day. It was an affront to the family as a whole, and to each individual member of it.

To Dan the possibility of Hugh's refusal to come opened like a grave. Until that moment he had never admitted to himself that the estrangement with his brother which began so suddenly and had continued so painfully might possibly be permanent. It plagued him sorely. It sobered him.

Alice approached. "You look tired, Dan," she said.

"I am." Then he burst out: "Why in the name of decency doesn't Hugh come, Alice? Look at mother's face. It's killing her. He might swallow his pride for her sake."

"Hush! He will, I think." She spoke as one who did not believe very firmly in her prediction.

Maude and Bob were in whispered colloquy behind the stove. Nell and Al had at last thrown off restraint and were wrestling together over a piece of mistletoe. Oscar Bloomquist was mixing cocktails from flasks he had brought with him. No one seemed to miss Hugh save Dan's mother.

It seemed a very bitter thing to Dan that his mother

could not snatch one day out of the revolving year in which she might be happy. He felt tears stinging his throat at the thought of her.

Hugh did not come. It was Mrs. Minturn, who without sign of disappointment, gave the signal for them to sit down.

Oscar broke the embarrassing lull which followed by lifting his glass to old Tom and saying, "Tom, here's looking at you." They drank. But the usual buzz of conversation did not follow. Bob and Maude sat consolately apart. Dan tried to be jovial, and failed miserably. It was Al Erickson who finally came to their rescue.

Al emitted cascades of talk—shop-talk. He figuratively brought Goldstein's stock of jewelry into the dining room and put it on display.

"Why, there is one diamond there as big as the buttons on my vest," he declared. He called it an "arc-light."

He enumerated the kinds of silver spoons Goldstein's shop possessed. He described minutely the filigree on the watch he had sold Mrs. Van Ivanstyne. He related the barber shop gossip about Mrs. Van Ivanstyne and her clandestine amours. He passed from her to the blackmailer's gossip about the banker's wife who had eloped with her negro chauffeur. He waxed eloquent over stones. He developed the theory that society women would sell their honor, their chastity, their souls for diamonds. He said as much. His faded eyes took on a kind of fishy lustre as he spoke. He rubbed his hands unctuously as he enlarged upon the merits of blue-white diamonds over yellow. He portrayed all rich women as concubines, and their husbands as intrigants. Yet no one stopped him. His fluent patter fell into the sore silences of the family circle gratefully.

Once Dan turned to Alice and whispered:

"A white-collar scissor-bill."

"A slave," was Alice's verdict.

During his recital, Nell fastened her eyes upon Al's face rapturously, proud that "her man was making a hit."

Al was finally interrupted by the telephone. Alice answered it. "It's for you, Maude. Ralph, I think."

So it happened that Maude heard the sequel of Ralph's absence while they all looked on. They heard Maude say sternly, "Son, where have you been?" Then they saw her reach for her handkerchief and burst into tears.

"Married?" she moaned.

"Oh, how could you, Ralphy?"

"Oh, son, you are only a kid."

So she talked, and so she wept. As the announcement reached Bob, he went off in gusts of laughter. But his face got very red toward the last, and he stopped laughing to blow his nose. His amusement was halted by a thought. "I'll probably have to keep both of them."

Finally Maude turned tearfully to face them.

"Did you hear that? Ralphy's married. Went up to Duluth. To Adelaide Grubb. He says she is only twenty-one, but I know she's not a day under thirty. And he's only a baby. . . . Oh, what a Christmas day."

"In heaven's name, who is Adelaide Grubb?" Bob asked.

Ralph's adventure or misadventure—as Alice Miller whispered to Dan two hours later—served one good purpose: it covered up the void left by Hugh's absence. No one seemed to notice the other empty chair at the table after that. After dinner, there were the "dishes to do" while the men smoked and talked about hunting expeditions, and the short winter's day soon was drifting into twilight. One by one the children slipped away. Nell and Al went first, to a movie. Bob and Maude left soon after soberly. Oscar and Lil in a storm of words. Lil had opened the question of Oscar's stingi-

ness. Finally Alice and Dan, who went for a walk.

"Dan," Alice said, "hain't families awful. Did you ever see a more tragic mess than today?"

"That's funny," he replied. "I was just thinking about that—about mother—she holds the family together."

They did not talk of love or deal in dreams, though the moon, an orange disc, drifted up above the trees.

When Dan got back to the house, he found it silent and dark. He groped toward his mother's familiar chair—the one over which he and Hugh had quarreled—and found her there alone. He knelt down beside her, and put his long arms about her waist, and buried his head in her lap. At this, she began to sob.

"Such an unhappy Christmas day. Oh, oh!" . . .

An hour later Dan walked rapidly away from his mother's house. He left it with relief, as if he had shaken something that throttled him from off his back. He walked down Pillsbury avenue. As he came near to the Gaylard house, music and the notes of mirth came down the walk to greet him.

CHAPTER VI

HIS FIRST SPEECH

It was three days before Dan discovered that the girl who attended the cigar stand on the House side was Bricktop.

That discovery was like the sudden turning of a corner upon unexpected beauty. Dan was lonesome, lost, submerged in the maelstrom of House reorganization. As he sat in his room—he had moved to St. Paul to save carfare—he seemed to himself superior to any and all his colleagues in that gesticulating mass of people's representatives, but when he left solitude, and entered the capitol, he suddenly felt ponderous and impotent. There were committees, and precedents, and formality and legislative courtesy, and priority rights, and parliamentary rights, and parliamentary procedure until Dan felt utterly at sea. He, a trained speaker, found difficulty in moving to adjourn, without embarrassment. So it was that when he saw the girl of The Tamborine—that face playful yet wistful—he felt as if an anchor had been let down out of heaven into chaos for him.

"Well, you got your nerve staring that way at a lady," she said.

"You!"

"Sure. I saw you the first day, but I wouldn't tune in because I was afraid you would upstage me."

"Honest, Bricktop, I'm glad to see you."

"Bricktop? Where do you get that stuff?"

"You won't tell me your name."

"Billy—Billy Wentz."

"I wouldn't have guessed that in a thousand years."

"It's really Wilhelmina," she continued, "I lost the handle during the war."

"Billy just fits you," he said, conscious of the glow her presence made him feel.

"The moment I got my lamps on you at the Tam I knew you was no ordinary guy."

"Thank you—Miss Wentz." His manner had stiffened as he noted that Senator Goodnite with whom he was on speaking terms had come in for a cigar.

"Smoke, Minturn?"

Daniel accepted a cigar, smiled back at Bricktop over his shoulder, and followed Senator Goodnite out. After that, life at the capitol took on the zest of romance and danger.

§

He liked the stir which went with the opening days of the session. He never entered the entrance under the great steps, to the imposing corridor, with its marble columns, multi-colored, veined, without a consciousness of touching important affairs. However sordid the machinations of the little Machiavellis came to seem, the collective whole did not seem sordid, or seeming sordid seemed big, momentous. It swayed human destiny—a mere clause, an inconspicuous phrase in a bill changed the course of thousands of lives. This oligarchy chosen by the electorate played Destiny to millions, Dan came to see.

"That is not a little thing," he thought. The bill that Senator Hopper advocated added one cent to the street car fares of Duluth, St. Paul and Minneapolis, and kept 100,000 office girls from having a vacation because of the extra tax upon their meager pay. "Damn the thing," Dan inwardly declared. The bill that Representative Swenson spoke for sent 20,000 waitresses and chamber-

maids into a 12-hour working day. "These are not little things," he said.

One day early in the session Senator Goodnite asked Dan to trade support on a bill—both inconsequential measures—and Dan refused on principle.

"Ask Jones," he suggested.

"No use. He's wet," Goodnite replied.

That explained a lot about Jones, the popularity of his room for instance. After that Dan came to see that legislators chose to observe superficial political lines, while actually they accepted the submerged economic ones. Jones was "wet." Harvard, "chamber of commerce." Quist was "street car." Delphine, "General Electric." Biddles, "red." Dan cogitated a bill designed to secure occupational representation, but Biddles beat him to it. It was killed in four and a half minutes without debate.

Naturally these factional tags emerged earlier in the session than personal differences, but it was not long before Dan came to know the under-surface gossip of the capitol.

There was the story of Representative Quist who had been the butler in the home of old Jim Tooner, organizer of one of the local traction lines, who had held Bob Tooner, present chairman of the board of directors, on his knee. Quist was no mere political partisan. He was continuing his blind devotion to the Tooner family, when he sponsored all street car legislation.

There was the romance of Representative Hurst, conservative whip, whose wife was in a hospital for nervous disorders, and whose secretary was the unobtrusive, volcanic Miss Knibbs, whose dark eyes were so restless and eloquent. As the legislators in time by tacit agreement came to recognize representation by class so they came to recognize the reality of Hurst's relation with Miss Knibbs. She was always spoken of by the men—quite

respectfully—among themselves as Mrs. Hurst, while the pallid invalid at the hospital was to them already dead.

One day in the midst of a debate on a bill providing for hail insurance, Dan bolted out of the House chamber in search of an absent partisan, and up a little frequented stair. There he came upon two figures intertangled, mouth pressed to mouth. It was Hurst and his secretary. Dan was the most embarrassed. "Excuse me," he said and retreated.

That night Hurst came to him with a discomfited look in his eyes. "Miss Knibbs is afraid you will not think well of her. You know, old man, I intend to make her my wife." Dan assured him that he considered what he had seen a confidence, which he would hold inviolate. At any rate, he asserted, he was not "squeamish." Thereafter a bond seemed to be laid between him and Hurst, but Miss Knibbs seemed more distant than ever. After all, what was Hurst to him—an "errand boy to the big bosses"—and yet there it was—their secret—holding them together in a kind of dreadful intimacy.

Dan came to think of the capital as a little world distinct. He spoke to the gray decrepit old elevator man—a pensioner of the majority machine—with hearty solicitude. He came to know that politicians—bitter and acrimonious foes on the House floor—often would go out together to dinner to discuss horses, cards, women, prize fights, and fruit trees. He saw everywhere the under-surface flow of sex preferences and antagonisms, the gay, adventurous province of romance, enveloping the sordid grind of law-making in an atmosphere of rose and gold.

He felt the lure of it, and fell into a malingering infatuation for Bricktop. Seeing her every day—he could pass out of the House Chamber, take a half hundred steps, and there she was—he became enamored.

Biddles came to him.

"Say, Minturn, take it from an old hand at this game; this is my third term. Don't play with the other side. It's an old trick, and a good one too. It never seems to wear out. They will flatter you. They will dine and wine you, but they will cripple you. They never forget. You've got to hand it to them. They never forget the class-struggle. They'll use you."

"There's Andrews now," Dan started to reply.

He was interrupted by a flood of profanity. "Andrews? He's nothing but a stool-pigeon."

Biddles, who was a thin, pallid man, in a frayed suit, and a black shirt without a tie, always made Dan conscious of his own clothes. Biddles was a mechanic by trade, and a flame by temperament.

Dan walked away from him wondering if Andrews, the minority leader, was a double-crosser. There was something itching, almost morbid, about the intense and bitter pursuit of a single objective by Biddles. He was a tireless and relentless watchdog of the other side. He fathomed motives, he stewed in suspicion; no one doubted his well-intentioned loyalty to the cause he represented. Several days after this incident Dan met Biddles again. He was with a handsome, fashionably dressed girl, whom he introduced to Dan as his daughter Althea. It was then that Biddles told Dan that he expected this to be his last term in the Legislature.

"I have done my share, Minturn," he declared. "And I can't afford to stay on. I must make a living." He waited. "And, anyway, Althea here is going to enter the University in the fall."

For some reason Dan was surprised. It seemed incongruous that Biddles, heralded by the reactionary newspapers as I. W. W., a political incendiary, was making plans for little bobbed-haired Althea to go to college. He saw Biddles in a new light.

Here was another human bond tethering him to an-

other colleague. So it went. The little world of the capitol seemed a place for confidences and comradely confession. Old Claus Spreckles, in an alcove of the House Committee room one day, began to lament the passing of the beer garden. It was such a comfortable, cool, "herzlich" place, where cares of business dropped off of one with every swallow. "There's nothing like a good glass of beer, you know," he continued. A sigh exuded from the heavy mouth, and the ruddy, convivial face of old Claus lost something of its habitual benignity.

Dan discovered also that politicians feel bonds other than the human, other than the economic; for instance, a consciousness of kind. He marveled to see Hurst, conservative whip, stand shoulder to shoulder with Andrews, leader of the minority, in order to oppose a measure that threatened their mutual patronage. . . .

When Alice wrote Dan to come to Minneapolis at the week-end, he used the stress of committee business as an excuse to stay in St. Paul.

§

Something amazing happened. It occurred about the middle of the session. Dan discovered that he was not happy. He thought: "I am just like a silly girl, who has married thinking that marriage will bring fulfillment of all her plans—only to discover that it shatters them." The realization came one morning as he awoke. He had often found that as he emerged out of sleep, vaguely aware of the day's tasks ahead, the little, peevish boy who dwelt somewhere deep within him always somehow asserted himself over the man that he was. The boy shrank from life and living. So it was on this morning. He awoke afraid of having to introduce an amendment to a bill of Hurst's—a job assigned him at a party caucus the night before.

As he recovered his poise, he tried to discover whence came his discontent. It was not that he wasn't making a place for himself; he was, if not on the House floor, in the caucuses of his party. Only last night had Andrews paid him the compliment of being jealous of him. Andrews had said: "Minturn will learn floor tactics about the third session. Just now he is too eager to break up party formation, to show off his voice." Yet Dan had carried his point, and was assigned the job of bringing in the amendment to Hurst's bill. To be sure, the bill was of no great consequence.

It was that his life seemed so mean: his room, first of all; his old hat that he had flung on a chair; himself, yes himself, with his ill-kept hands—his printer's hands—with ink which he had touched more than a month ago still discoloring the nails. Life was not intended to be mean. Somewhere—yes, at this very moment—there must be places where life was lived grandly, even magnificently.

There was Bricktop. He felt no degradation because of his passion for her. He was sure that she wasn't "tough," and, yet, there was nothing virginal about her. She was hard and she allowed to play about her his wildest and most dissolute imaginings. Her red hair, pale eyes, slightly upturned nose, her inexplicably soft voice, and hard slenderness invited brutality. She offered a fragile resistance, yet she seemed capable of great endurance. And a woman—he asked himself—shouldn't a woman be something more than this? What more he could not say—not merely a mother, he did not mean, but a music, a light streaming out of darkness, a nameless and baffling beauty. . . . Yet, Bricktop was far more than Alice. She was potent—an insistent voice.

His room here was better than the one he had had at Mrs. Erickson's—a second-story front room with bay window and soiled lace curtains. A sheet-iron stove,

which he could see now from where he lay in the cot, defiled the room. There were ashes on the faded rug under the stove. Gray, murky light came in at the windows.

That afternoon Dan went to Minneapolis, to see his mother, he said, but in reality to look up Rakov. He wanted to talk with Rakov.

He found his mother in the kitchen, her dress smelling of grease and smoke, but her face, oh, so radiant. Yet as she talked about "how she missed him," "how fond she was of him," "how long he had been gone," it annoyed Dan, for she accepted him as a master of life, a giver, one who had conquered all things, whereas he was in so much need of help. Nothing was settled. Nothing. He pitied his mother. Every time he looked upon that worn, radiant face, he was filled with rebellion. Yet he could not be comfortable with her. He felt a vast distaste for her and for her house. He escaped to Rakov's, but found the book-shop closed. A sign bearing Rakov's scrawl said that he would be back in a few days. In an eating house on Washington Street he heard that Rakov had entered the publishing field and was interested in bringing out an unexpurgated edition of the memoirs of a seventeenth-century prostitute.

That evening Minturn went for a walk, first along the river bottoms, where the houses looked like the landmarks of a vanished country-side, but where the emell of poverty clung insistently; thence under the hill, and finally out along Summit Avenue. The inevitable fascination which the houses of the rich had for him led his steps hither. He went peering curiously into windows from which lights gleamed. He had not lost the restless ache of the morning, and the sight of wealth did not lessen it.

In front of a colonial house his eye was arrested by an open door. Some one was emerging. In a moment this

person had traced the hundred steps and stood beside him. He was a little man, excited and gesticulating.

"Stop a moment, will you?" he implored. "Come in just a moment."

Dan was surprised. He thought a ludicrous mistake had been made. He started to explain.

"Hurry, please." The little man took his arm and half-dragged, half-guided him into the house. It was a luxurious room into which he was led, a room filled with mellow light, which gave off a sense of deep restfulness. The little man ran toward a radio instrument in the corner, picked up the receiver and clapped it on Dan's head.

"See, I've got Paris. What do you think of that?" He danced about like a boy, or a wizened child.

Dan was fascinated. Someone was talking in his ear in a language he did not understand.

"Do you think it is Paris?" he asked.

"Sure, listen."

Dan could not say, but there was something profoundly moving in this eavesdropping upon a universe. His mind tried to traverse the miles which lay between him and the voice. Paris! If it were only Paris, Ohio, it was thrilling.

Suddenly the voice stopped, like the going out of a light, and an ocean and half a continent lay opaque between.

"You heard?" demanded the little man.

"Yes," Dan replied slowly. "To think that the first time I ever listened in I heard Paris talking."

He, himself, the little man, the instrument that lay inanimately upon his lap, suddenly became romantic.

"I'll get you Calgary, or would you prefer to hear Atlanta, or Dallas?"

As the fanatic tinkered with his set, Dan surveyed the room. What impressed him most was its size and mas-

siveness. It reminded him of a public hall, richly embellished, and filled with ornate furniture. There were great spaces of floor, covered with soft-toned rugs, and chairs of dark wood richly carved in arabesque. Oil paintings displayed under hooded lamps were hung at regular intervals on the high walls. A fire of logs crackled in the fireplace.

It was good to be there, somehow, though strange. The little host bustled round and brought out cigars and drink, better stuff than what one got in Jones's room. They heard Calgary and Atlanta, rich southern voices pronouncing rounded "a's" and soft "r's." Dan rose to go abruptly, the thought suddenly striking him that he was intruding. At the door the little man again detained him.

"May I have your name and address?" he asked. "You see, I happened to be all alone here tonight. Even the butler is out. I want to announce to the press tomorrow that I got Paris, and I want you for a witness."

For some reason this explanation aroused in Dan all the latent class feeling and suspicion. He saw the whole pleasant incident as a cheap device or insult.

"I'll be damned if I will," he declared, and bolted out of the house, leaving his host speechless.

He tramped the empty streets past other imposing houses, indignant.

"All he could think of was getting into the papers—the fool." Occasionally below in the river bottoms Minturn caught a glimpse of swinging lanterns on a moving train, and arc lights amidst smoke and dust. He tore along, puzzled, angry. Whenever he smashed into the other class, he manifested his contempt for it by renewing his resolution to get ahead. He would seize power—the governorship. They would see.

"My God! What a room! That house must have cost as much as the capitol. Did I really hear Paris? Paris? The whole world could be made one."

§

Senator Goodnite rated himself an independent, but his vote did not show it. He had a list of absences recorded against important bills. He was a huge, fat man, with a round, hard face, and a bluff, jovial manner that usually beat down all opposition by its bluntness or joviality. He smoked cigars continually, and told everyone—as he himself said—“to go to hell.” Goodnite was chummy with Dan. Why, Dan did not know, or understand. He often met Goodnite at the cigar stand when Dan went to banter Billy Wentz, proprietor, and Goodnite to buy cigars.

“Look here, Minturn,” Goodnite said one day, “I want you to go out to lunch with me—today—now.”

Dan refused—gave some excuse. He was rigid in his position. He ate at a lunch stand not far from the capitol. “The Senate,” where a table d’hôte meal was served for 30 cents. That was good enough for him.

“Now, look a-here, Minturn, I won’t bite you. I know a dandy joint downtown where they serve a 65-cent lunch which can’t be beat.”

Dan did not go. . . .

But several days later, when Andrewson asked him to go to lunch with him, Dan reluctantly accepted. Andrewson was the minority leader, he argued. Andrewson selected a café in one of the better hotels downtown. It was an unusual place with sunlight filtering through silken curtains, an unobtrusive fountain—a Niobe—and a screened orchestra. To Dan it seemed as if he were entering a room where it was always springtime. He took the chair which the girl, a picture of cleanliness in starched linen, pulled out for him, with a sense of guilt.

In some distant background of his consciousness the worn figure of his mother lingered, she who smelt of grease and smoke; she, who had never had anything for

herself; a face cut by deep wrinkles, eyes too often filled with blank despair—Bah! He must not think of her.

The orchestra was playing a Neapolitan dance song. The water glittered on the breasts of the Niobe. How beautiful that figure's body was! It was good to be here.

After the steak was eaten, and the coffee was drunk, Andrewson and Dan had cigars. It was in that half hour that followed that the full appeal of dining at the Niobe came over Dan. A languor, a sense of ease, and infinite glow of comfort stole over him, something he had never known before, his first taste of sophisticated leisure. Andrewson seemed never to want to go, and no one seemed to care whether he and Dan went or not.

About the spacious room other diners, over cigarettes and coffee, were holding tête-à-tête. Casually Andrewson pointed out to Dan that the party yonder comprised the Lieutenant-Governor and the Attorney-General. They often dined here, he said, rather proudly. Another party numbered the vice-president of a great Northwest railway system and the head of a downtown department store corporation.

Andrewson talked well—not about politics—about raising sheep and the last boxing match he had seen. Dan leaned back, warmed, drowsy, content to listen, to see. His stomach was splendidly full. The aroma of the Havana soothed his nostrils. The girl in starched linen had nice eyes. The orchestra, so politely distant, had forsaken jazz for an opera medley. The violins made romance of a familiar aria.

Somehow, in that café, Dan found for the first time some small fulfillment of his anticipations in regard to being in public affairs.

"This was more like it," he thought. He was Representative Minturn at last.

§

Dan and Billy often spoke in words carrying forbidden implications.

"Good morning," Dan greeted her. "This is a good morning for me, you know, or do you know?"

"It's your birthday or something?"

"Yes. That's why I gave myself a treat by coming in here."

"For a cigar? What brand, sir?" Billy could be as arch as milady.

"Just give me one puff of Billy Wentz—that's my favorite." He knew he was being foolish. He did not care what he said, so long as she allowed his voice to vibrate huskily, without rebuke, and so long as she answered softly with eyes averted.

"Well?" She turned toward him defiantly. "Why don't you take that puff? Or are you waiting for a light?" She extended her flaming hair toward him.

"Some day I'll surprise you by taking you up."

"If you only dared. You're all talk. You're really afraid of wild women."

"Give me a chance. Not here."

"Always thinking of your reputation."

"No; your reputation."

"I'm not running for office."

"You may be some day."

"What—dog-catcher?"

"No; queen of the vamps."

"Or secretary to Representative Minturn, like Miss Knibbs." She was dazzling in her impudence.

"That would suit me. Let's begin to know each other now."

"Well, I offered you a puff a while ago. You're slow."

"I won't be slow, if you'll go to The Tamborine with me. Honest, Billy, you owe it to me."

And then would begin all over again his pleadings and her obduracy. She would never yield. Dan called her flirt, trifle. She only smiled—her defiant, maddening smile.

§

There came a day when an unwonted wave of excitement spread over the capitol. Dan noticed it first as he came in. Representatives were gathered in groups whispering. Toward noon, Andrewson told him casually, "Gaylard's taken a room at the Pioneer Hotel."

"Yes." Dan waited. What of it? Who is Gaylard? he wanted to ask.

"It means mischief. He's over here to whip 'em into line on the appropriation bills. We'll caucus tonight."

The labor group caucused at the Golden Valley House in an upper room. Amidst the smoke of innumerable cigars, there was a good deal of hot talk, but Andrewson held the majority pretty well in line.

Biddles came and gave trouble. He was cynical of political action, said he felt contempt for the whole "mouthing business." With a sneer on his pallid face, he sat back, only to break in now and then with bitter irrelevancy. He had a plan, he announced.

"I move you, Mr. Chairman," he declared, "that this group of representatives serve notice on the House and Senate that it refuses to attend another session of the respective houses until Gaylard and his gang of fixers take bag and baggage and go back to Minneapolis."

"Representative Biddles, you are out of order," snapped Andrewson.

"I appeal from the ruling of the chair," retorted the interloper, with a wry smile.

There followed a parliamentary wrangle in which Biddles showed a remarkable display of technicalities and furnished a good deal of amusement in his tactics of delay for everyone except Andrewson.

After this controversy, the meeting settled down to a discussion of two plans of action, one proposed by Andrewson, and the other by Minturn. Andrewson was cautious, a Fabian fighter. He proposed to keep the anti-injunction bill, passage of which was the main objective of the minority at this session, in committee, in the hope of trading support on the appropriation measure for support on the anti-injunction act.

Dan demanded the opposite course of action.

"Away with all whisperings in corridors and sniggling," he urged. "Bring in the anti-injunction measure at once, make a clean fight for it; let the Gaylard gang defeat it, and then use the defeat as the excuse for holding up the coin."

At the word "sniggling," Andrewson sniffed, turned color and clenched his fists. When Dan had finished, the minority leader sprang to his feet, bitter and distraught.

"I admit," he said—his voice was cold and bitter—"that when one undertakes to do quiet work on a measure it does not give a chance for orating, nor pitch a fellow into the headlines. But it passes bills."

Someone laughed.

For a moment Minturn felt himself tremble, and grope in darkness. He saw Hugh's white face and the peculiar way in which his brother pulled back his lips from small, sharp teeth. He yearned to pommel Andrewson's face, as he had once raked Hugh's with blows—but civilization held. He found himself on his feet, peculiarly calm and clear-brained, striving for words that would snarl and bite.

"When I said 'sniggle,' Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen, I meant 'sniggle.' 'Sniggle' you know has a peculiar origin. It's corruption of the word 'snuggle,' to embrace, and is related to 'smuggle,' to sneak. It's a near kinsman of the words 'graft' and 'buddle.' When I used them I did not intend them for the honorable

chairman, but since he appears to take them to himself, that is his business."

"Insults." Andrewson's voice was shrill.

They—the old and young leaders—glared at each other; then quit their brawl. When the vote was taken, Dan's plan had prevailed, but it was Andrewson and not Minturn who was authorized to put it into action.

Three days later the anti-injunction bill was suddenly reported out of the judiciary committee, where it was supposed to be reposing until Andrewson waved his wand. Andrewson was not in the House at the time, but was on the Senate side, lobbying for a minor measure, and Dan scented trickery, even collusion, on the part of his leader.

In a brief preliminary skirmish, he saw Hurst, the conservative whip, marshal his forces, and saw his own ranks grow confused, and waver. Then he was on his feet.

Dan was cool now. His mind picked up with precision the scattered threads of history, economics and facts. His St. Paul speech on the use of injunctions in labor disputes came back like clear, fresh thoughts, and his voice was vibrant with conviction. He felt the galleries grow tense with interest. He felt the tug of approval in his own followers, and finally even Hurst paused midway in the aisle and waited respectfully while young Thor thundered.

He spoke just a half hour, but in that time he traversed the thirty-five years of injunction history, traced its effects on the body politic and painted graphically the culmination of these "night attacks on American constitutional liberty."

He finished. The vote, when taken, sent the bill back as he desired, by a margin of five votes, to committee. Five Democrats and three Republicans had followed the minority lead. It was these eight votes which Dan had won over.

§

He was elated. Within him flamed consciousness of triumph. He could not keep it from showing in his walk, in the toss of his head, in his voice, deeper now, ending on a new tone of conviction. He was surrounded now by his followers, admiration in their eyes, and gratitude in their voices. Victory tasted sweet, and with the thrill of power came desire for woman.

He came upon them suddenly. Senator Goodnite was bending over the cigar case, his great stomach pressed against the glass, until it seemed almost to envelop it, his cigar rolling in his expansive mouth.

"Girlie," the fat man was saying, "I'd like to buy you a fur coat."

"And a Stutz foursome, and bungalow, and a dozen pairs of silk stockings." Billy's voice trailed off in a covetous little gargle, half a demand, half a caress.

Pleasure went out of Representative Minturn swiftly, as if blown from him by a chill wind, and in its place welled desire to wound her, and cynicism.

CHAPTER VII

BATTLEMENTS OF POWER

SENATOR Goodnite wheeled his bulk slowly in the creaking chair and smiled.

"It's thumbs up for you, Minturn," he said. "You're a winner. You can go where you like, as far as you like, the sky is the limit for you."

One liked Goodnite even while one beheld his grossness and preponderant carnality. His moon-face, great belly and placid assurance were irresistible.

"Unlimited possibilities," he continued, his voice reverberating in his mammoth abdomen. "The governorship—the senatorship—and beyond." The "beyond" was indicated by an ungraceful flourish of the cigar.

Dan was reaping the reward of a personal triumph—the sweetest of all triumphs, those which artists win and feel most keenly. It had begun the moment he had left the House floor after the anti-injunction speech. His colleagues were now his followers. Even Andrewson, defiant yet contrite, acknowledged his power by showing him deference in little things, and the majority leaders, including Hurst, made him feel himself a marked man.

Goodnite showed his appreciation by renewing his invitation to dinner. Dan refused and then suddenly accepted. It was different now, he concluded. He had put himself on record. They knew where he stood now.

Goodnite had chosen a Chinese restaurant. To its lacquered beauty, its air of sequestered leisure, its incense and quasi-romantic atmosphere, Dan was sensible.

He missed what was cheap and meretricious in the surroundings, and accepted only the surface appeal. In these surroundings his ego expanded. He felt himself Daniel Minturn, the potential leader of his party. These Oriental trappings, the soft-stepping, almond-eyed Chinese waiters, the tea, the bamboo cages where canaries hung made a grand opera of the spirit for Dan. He lolled back in his chair with almost the abandon that his companion had. He was warm, sure, content.

Dan had not taken the trouble to answer Goodnite as he rambled on in his own good-natured way. As one man had put it, "listening to Goodnite was like standing on a railroad crossing, waiting for a train of empty freight cars to pass." The recollection of this joke made Dan smile and allowed him to feel superior.

"Thank the Lord one man's as good as another in this country," Goodnite declared. "You're the living proof of it, Minturn. Here you are a mere kid, with the political world at your feet. And you're a poor man, too."

"Yes, thank God!" Dan answered fervently, thinking of the little man and his luxurious home with whom he had adventure several evenings before.

"I like you, Minturn, because I am a good deal like you, independent and all that. I can look any man in the eye and tell him to go to hell. I liked the way you plunked it to 'em on that bill the other day. I heard about it from Hurst. It was big. That's what it was, big and potential. You'll go far. . . . Been to the University?"

Dan shook his head.

"No? Tain't nothing against you."

Dan said that he wished that he had a chance to live a University education down.

There was more of this "gravy" from Goodnite, so much of it that its effects upon Dan was lost. What Dan liked was the faint aroma of romance—the inti-

mation of power—which his presence there with Goodnite gave him.

Finally the Senator said: "Look here, Minturn, there's a fellow I should like to have you meet. One of your kind, a self-made man, a winner, who has not a taint of the snob about him. I think it would do you good to know him, Dan." This was the first time Goodnite had dropped into a full tone of intimacy. "A young fellow like you with such a brilliant future before you deserves a boost, and Hiram Goodnite is the fellow who likes to give it." His voice dropped to a whisper. "You know, Gaylard is in a position to help a likely young fellow like you in the political game."

This last idea popped out of the stream of lazy conversation into the center of Dan's consciousness with a shrill report. So it was Gaylard? And just what was the import of this fat man's kindness?

"I wouldn't cross the street to meet Gaylard," Dan declared, slowly and passionately.

Goodnite chuckled. But as he chuckled his shrewd eyes from under puffy lids never left Dan's face.

"Oh, ho!" he shouted. "you thought I was trying to fix you. Now, didn't you? You're as touchy as a racehorse. When I was only trying to do you a favor. I know Gaylard only slightly. I never play with him myself. I'm independent, you know. I can look any man in the face and tell him to go to hell—even Gaylard. I just thought it would be nice, you know, to help a likely young fellow along a bit." he chuckled.

"I don't need help from Gaylard," Dan answered proudly.

Goodnite ignored Dan's rising impatience.

"Say," he asked, "you're not afraid to meet him, are you?"

Dan blustered. "Of course not."

"You're not one of those fellows that's all talk, are you, Minturn?"

The fat man leaned back, his head upraised, poised, his mobile face stiffened, for once, in an acute teasing leer.

Dan hesitated.

"I'll see him," he declared suddenly. "Though why, I don't know."

When Dan had said that, Goodnite abandoned the subject, and suggested they go to a show, to The Garter, Lena Daly was there.

At the burlesque, the fat man seemed suddenly to have fallen into repose. He squatted in the chair his glowing eyes fixed on what he called the "live-stock" on the stage. There was one girl in the chorus whom Dan could not keep his eyes off. Her pretty legs moved so proudly; her face never lost its wide and radiant smile; she seemed glad to be there, youth unbroken, unbruised, on parade. Dan wondered how she could be so gay, alive, so unspoiled. Again and again his eyes came back to her. He thought he would like to know her, to dance with her. In that moment, he forgot Bricktop, and he hadn't forgotten her in days.

§

Dan met Gaylard at *The Club*. *The Club* made Dan afraid. It was an alien place, an amazing place, built in the medieval style with long corridors dim-lit, filled with melting, Oriental rugs, great spaces, and marble stairways. From the moment, Dan entered with Goodnite, he was impressed. He tried not to show it, to ignore the parade of physical beauty, but it assailed his senses and left him slightly unmanned. He wondered why he had come, felt insecure, and blustered and swagged to hide his self-consciousness. In a private room upstairs, Dan sat down to dine with Goodnite and Gaylard.

Gaylard had a high, effeminate voice, and his face was

minutely wrinkled. He called Goodnite "Hiram" and put Dan at ease at once. He was of good bulk, and his little eyes searched incisively the eyes of his guest.

While Dan was occupied with inspecting the array of silver on napery of ivory-whiteness, and the display of food, Goodnite and Gaylard kept up conversation casual, almost intimate. The meal was what men call a "steak dinner." A huge porterhouse, several inches thick, cooked slowly on a plank without loss of succulent juices formed the *pièce de résistance*. Dan had never tasted anything like it. With it were served French fried potatoes, asparagus tips, peas, and brandied ice. There were pots of delicious black coffee which turned to a rich yellow under the cream. The food engaged Dan's full attention. It awoke something in him, a wistful primitive desiring for comfort and security.

Gaylard spoke now of going to Washington, now of touching at Jersey City to see the big prize-fight, and now of going to Florida to confer with the President who was sojourning at Palm Beach. It was all so matter-of-fact, all so suggestive of power, great reserves of money, influence, knowledge of the world. At length Gaylard turned to discussing his latest pet project, erection of a hospital for aged people.

"We broke ground a week ago," he told them, "and after the excavations were made, I discovered that the building was turned the wrong way to afford the best view up the river, and I had to turn the whole blasted business end for end."

"It must have cost something," Dan said, more to have something to say than to pay an unctuous compliment.

"Nothing short of \$20,000," Gaylard answered. "But what's that when you are spending a half million?"

Dan did not reply. He suspected Gaylard of wishing

to impress him, but suspecting this he could not escape the spell of Gaylard's conversation. It left Dan breathless.

After cigars were brought, they pushed back their chairs and talked. Goodnite told the latest story, a divorce court incident. Then the conversation, now chiefly monologue, verged to politics, the prospects in the state two, four, yes, eight years hence. Dan was surprised to see that Gaylard seemed to know all the ins and outs, the secret petty jealousies and violent interactions of factional leaders not only in his own party, but in Dan's. He discussed with photographic detail conditions in districts as far north as Hibbing and as far south as Lanesboro. He seemed to carry a map of the State showing lines for every one of the 3,300 precincts in his mind. He made Dan feel like a child. No vital issues or questions of policy, however, obtruded.

Turning his friendly eyes on Dan, Gaylard abruptly asked, "What are your people going to ask for next year?"

The question took Dan aback. He didn't know exactly, but the inquiry served to recall him to the reality of the situation. He was on his guard in a moment. Gaylard went on, "Since the Farmer's League is dead, and you people have allowed us to steal some of your thunder, I don't quite see where you are drifting."

"It's the old issue, Mr. Gaylard. If you defeat the anti-injunction bill you will see what we may make of that."

They were casual.

"I suppose you want to be governor?"

Gaylard put the question coolly.

"I'm not counting on it," Dan answered, without show of equivocation.

Goodnite laughed. "No one ever does, Minturn. But you're the best bet, and you know it."

Dan shook his head. There was a pause. Finally Gaylard shot out the inquiry, "Just what is it you want, Minturn?"

The question was charged with challenge, and there was a hard, blue gleam in Gaylard's eyes. Dan waited a minute before answering. The inquiry marked an interior crisis. Dan had never asked himself just what he wanted. He had not known himself. The governorship—to be sure. But what behind it? What was the pain that flared behind ambition and drove him on?

He remembered his mother, her blighted face, her faded cotton dresses, her frail brave figure, her accusing sad eyes. He recalled poignantly the sense of lost things her figure conjured up. He was smitten again with the acrid smell of grease and smoke which hung about her even in memory. With the image of her in mind, he felt the clutch of compassion in his throat, and the room with its splendor, the gleaming table, and all his unaccustomed surroundings became revolting to him. He felt guilty for being there. Then he looked back at Gaylard, his own eyes burning with a hard flame.

"Life treats a lot of folks rough, Mr. Gaylard. They work, and they hope. They work, and they go on planning, thinking that just round the corner—tomorrow—life is going to bring them something fine. And some morning they awake and they find that life has passed them by. They have had nothing. They are going to get nothing.

"My God! that is awful. What I want to do," he went on, his mother's face still remembered, "is to give more folks a chance at having something, something fine."

Goodnite's face wore a perplexed expression. Gaylard seemed astonished at such a fervid naive confession.

"Yes, yes," he said, "that is what we all want to do, you know."

But after that, they did not seem to be getting on

very well. There was an unaccountable difficulty about going on from where they left off, and Goodnite soon suggested they be going.

§

Dan thought much about his mother after that. She clung to his thoughts like a lover, replacing Bricktop. Yet he did not go to see her. He was intermittently torn with pity and revulsion. And he thought much of *The Club*, its wealth and beauty, and the easy and expensive life that went on there.

Biddles met him in the corridor. He annoyed Dan. He was somehow so obtrusive, and he always was making an appeal to one's will. "The history of the labor movement is the history of betrayed leadership," he said apropos of nothing. Dan brushed the reference aside, and strolled away. He left Biddles standing alone, a forlorn figure against a background of marble pillars and mural splendor.

§

There came a day, soon after, when Bricktop was gracious. Dan was inclined to be piqued when he recalled her apparent intimacy with Goodnite, but she stirred his senses. He was servile to her. Whenever he saw the gleam of her auburn hair in sunlight, or the quaint pallor of her cheeks beneath the rouge, or her lips softly parted, or discerned the contour of her bosom against the yielding blouse, he experienced a great flood of warmth breaking over and through his body. He felt friendly. A bond seemed to be laid between them. The bond extended to other persons and to things.

There were times, however, when he rebelled against his passion for Wilhelmina. In those moments, when he felt her as a trammeling flood of ease and delight, he

fought against her, and against all the life at the capitol. He longed to go back to the printing shop; more than that, to go back to a life of toil and self-denial. He thought of Hugh. He saw the moulder's garden at the mill, where the white-hot iron flowed. Hugh, sweat-stained, embittered, yet heroic.

Then he came back to her, to the faint sweet odor that hung about her like an unseen cloud. He was powerless. He came toward her smiling, the raw spaces of his being open toward her, where she might strike when he was most vulnerable.

"Billy," he urged, "you have got to go to The Tamborine with me. Tonight. Now."

To his surprise, she consented. . . .

As he left his room that night, dressed with unusual care, he was excited and grave. He experienced a slight nausea and his face was flushed; he was like a runner about to start in an important race. His mind ran along hotly to a consideration of what they would do after the dance. It seemed to him—no, he knew that Bricktop's consent to go to The Tamborine with him swept away barriers which had been dividing them. She was opening doors to him, and he knew it.

The Tamborine! It flooded his mind with pleasure. The lilt and swing of feet to the surge of drum and saxophone intoxicated his senses. The flower-strewn river of syncopation again—and her.

She came toward him; he thought, at first, shyly, but when he drew her close he saw that she had the clear resolution of a mature woman in her eyes. They whirled away on a rainbow torrent of sound! How she danced, madly! He could feel her give herself without reservation now. He whispered:

"If that long, yellow-haired beau of yours comes tonight, sweetie, you won't go with him. Say no."

She laughed. "No, goosie, I won't."

"A moon rose over a sea of waving grain—a tiny

skiff fluttered on a black, thick pool—a wind-swept hill-top etched with poplars, eager yet imperturbable—a star-littered stretch of purple sky—night in a fragrant grove of pine trees—a bed of odorous pine boughs”—these were the pictures that the music made for him.

And what for her? Her head bobbed just beneath his chin. The course, thick red locks were pulled back from the scalp in the middle to make the tight knots over the ears. What did she think? She was arimate, warm, desirable. She didn't think. She was protoplasmic. She was incarnate jazz. She was a flood of ecstasy.

"We must go somewhere after this," he whispered.

Her eyes danced merrily.

"I'm hungry now," she answered.

"No, after the eats," he insisted.

"Sure."

Between dances, as they rested, Billy pointed out to him a girl, a little figure with an oval face and great dark eyes, a face that arrested attention at once. It was the countenance of a creature without a soul. As Dan scrutinized her, her eyes sought his blankly and boldly, as if to say, "You are a man. I know you. I am a female child. You understand."

"Who is it?" he asked Bricktop.

"Laura's child."

"Who's Laura?" he inquired. Bricktop began to laugh furtively. Her eyes were filled with a lascivious gleam.

"You don't know Laura?" she demanded, still laughing. "I thought all you men knew her."

Light began to dawn upon him.

"No, I don't happen to have the pleasure of her acquaintance," he replied, smiling now, too, knowingly.

"Laura, queen of the underworld," she mused. "She comes here to chaperone Nellie. Nellie's twelve years old and knows her way around."

She directed his attention to a figure in a far corner

of the room. Dan saw a small woman in a dark gown, a black sailor hat shedding a black veil down over her face.

"That's Laura," she explained. Laura's worth some money and Nellie's going to college." Bricktop's inner mirth was still reflected in her face.

Dan marvelled at Billy's manner. Her attitude seemed to him nasty. In exploring the realm of his companion's mind this was the first time that he had come upon any foul corners. There was something—not superficially, but inherently—coarse about Wilhelmina Wentz, he saw.

They were dancing again. How this creature of his could dance. It seemed she found the music of Tango Stair's orchestra a habitat in which she was perfect denizen. It was her world. At length even she sickened.

"Are you tired?" he asked.

"No, I never get tired. But let's go." Her glance was a challenge.

Out into the night. A flock of stars showed in the trough of sky above the high buildings. There were the empty streets with a suggestion of the open country about them. Bricktop was graver.

Dan suggested a restaurant. No, she would not have it.

"You can come up to my room," she told him.

"Can I, Billy? Thank you, dear."

In the back bedroom of a two-story rooming-house they forgot the need of food. There were few preliminaries. Billy opened the closet door and, shielded by it, donned a kimona. Returning to him, she pushed him down into the one chair and, seating herself on his knees, she demanded: "Let's talk first."

He saw her eyes search for the clock, an alarm clock attached to a string above the pillow on the single bed. It was ten minutes of one. She talked excitedly while he

toyed with her hair, and interrupted her with kisses.

As she chattered, Dan knew for the first time what in her fascinated him. It was energy. She was a stream of power. All female. There was no rebellion in her against a nature which had made her a woman.

"Men are poor fish," she reflected momentarily. "You want only one thing, and we soon find that out." She laughed.

He kissed her throat.

"Wait," she implored, pushing him from her.

Dan now heard an auto horn honking in the street below. It was insistent. He glanced at the clock. It was one. Billy slid from his knees and went to the window. He followed. Below, drawn up beside the curb, they saw the black bulk of a large machine.

"Somebody's sick," he said, turning toward her. "It's an ambulance."

"Ambulance, you poor nut. It's the Murphy-wagon."

He saw the vulnerability of his position. He looked around desperately. The closet door was open.

"I'll hide there. You tell them, tell them anything."

"You better go." Her face was grave. She was visibly distraught.

He pressed toward her. He seized her, and drew her close to him. He kissed her mouth and throat. She was reluctant.

"Billy, Billy," he whispered. "I love you. Don't send me away."

She broke from him. Her eyes were harsh and bright.

"You damn fool," she murmured. "It's you they're after."

"Mc!"

Suspicion began to stir in him.

"I won't go," he asserted grimly. "Not until later. I'll buy them off."

She laughed.

"You're more of a dumb-bell than I thought you was. They're after you I'll tell 'ye . . . Old Goodnite sent them."

They fell back from each other as if invisible arms had swept between them. Streams of antipathy and hatred poured their poison over them. Dan trembled.

"It's a frameup, kid," she added, and saw his face writhe under her words.

"No, no," he begged.

From the street below, the patrol wagon was still sending up strident honks.

"Oh, Billy," he said, "I loved you . . . You God-damn, double-crossing son-of-a-bitch," the obscene words came to his lips sweetly.

"Oh, honey, don't, don't," she plead. "I didn't know that you'd care that way."

He menaced her now with his fists. Then he broke down and sobbed.

"Listen," she said, "It ain't too late yet. You can get away. I know how." She tugged at his arm.

He was himself again, cool, indifferent to her. She gave him directions. "Go down the back stairs through the kitchen, into the cellar, then out the cellar entrance into the alley. It's on the other side of the house from the car. Beat it down the alley. . . . The bulls are careless. They think I'm holding you here."

He turned from her without a word. She called after him softly, "I'm sorry, Dan." He did not answer. He pulled the shoes from his feet. He groped down the stair. It was as she had said—the kitchen—the cellar—the alley—freedom. Thank God! There were stars in the sky at the end of the narrow slit between the houses.

§

Bricktop was not at work the next day, nor was Dan. He sulked in his bare room. He had thought he loved

Billy Wentz. Now he despised her. He did not ever want to see her again, though it was white of her to double-cross Goodnite.

And Goodnite? A slow hatred, a hatred not merely impulsive but tempered by a view of life and politics, flared up within him.

§

April came. The legislation dragged through its closing days monotonously. Outside the world was breaking into bud and bloom. One might pause for a moment on the capitol steps and nose strange transcendental, immaterial odors out of the air. The wheat fields were bursting into green across the leagues of western prairie—this, one knew, as he stood in the city's streets, sensing the uprise of growing things.

The legislature was deadlocked. It was marking time, meeting and adjourning, squabbling over inconsequential measures. Dan was indifferent. His power was low. The anti-injunction bill, round which his party rallied, was buried in committee, with few chances of ever getting out. He went into battles grimly, with a bravado that won him new laurels as a skilled parliamentarian. The leadership of his party was passing from Andrewson to him. His disgust was secret. He sat in his office an office shared with three other representatives—looking callously out upon a sunlit stretch of lawn.

It seemed to him that he had failed ignominiously. He saw life now as something essentially mean, chaotic, cruel. Its materials were too heavy and unyielding for man to mould into pattern and form As he mused, he saw brick-layers at work across the street lifting a brick wall span by span toward the sky. He yearned to go back to day labor, to shaping raw stuff with his hands

One morning, soon after, as he bolted into his office,

he saw a young woman sitting there. She turned a dazzling face toward him as he entered, and smiled. She was a lady, that one saw at a glance, from the tip of her silk-straw hat to the soles of her neat, flat-heeled pumps. He halted abashed in the center of the room.

"I am Agatha Morreson," she said. "And you are Representative Minturn. My uncle, Senator Gaylard, has told me of you. Won't you come into your own office, sir?"

She was smiling with the faintest touch of irony.

It seemed to Dan that he already knew her.

"Oh, I know," he said. "It's a mistake. You must be looking for Representative Hurst's office. It's across from mine."

"Yes?" she said.

But she did not hurry away. They stopped and chatted.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW DAN LOVED AGATHA

"I HAVE it," he said. "I knew I had known you before. I saw you election night with your uncle in the car."

"Perhaps it was before that," Agatha announced with a slow smile.

Dan had torn his cap off his head, and in his efforts to remember, was passing his free hand through his tousled hair. He looked very boyish, and yet somehow quite "senatorial," as he surveyed her from his height. They were standing under a birch tree overlooking the river. Spring was in the air and had shed its sheen over stream and field. Dan's head was completely filled with Agatha.

"Strange," he mused, "your hair is red, too, but richer than Billy's. You're so still, deep-like, strange, strong. Your voice is very soft and commanding. And you never laugh, but always seem to be smiling with yourself at something—at me—at the world. You have a wonderful body—so full, rounded, yes, sleek and silky. Dare I touch you ever?" His mind following the tortuous undercurrent of his impulses never got beyond that dare.

He drew very near to her in his thoughts, yet he stood far off from her in actuality. He often just sat and stared at her, as she in turn sat, with her immaculate hands in her lap and stared across the river, seeing and unseeing.

Agatha's hair, soft and shimmering, an improvement

on nature, its texture as if taken from a mould, falling so artfully about her ears and temples.

Agatha's eyes so golden brown, so clear, so cynical, so bold, so untender, with the long lashes as if combed.

Agatha's skin, so smooth and healthy, the rouge blending with—or was it rouge? The skin overlaid with lovely down, more visible on the nape of her neck, and her tapering arms.

Agatha's teeth, even, dazzling white. Agatha's mouth too large for her oval face, with lips full, yes sensual, yet cut exquisitely and moulded like a statue's.

She was a perpetual feast to him. She smelt of Paradise. He did not care about talking to her if he could only be where he could see her. So he told himself. She crowded the thought of every other human being out of his mind, his mother, Bricktop, Alice Miller.

She made him irrational. He forgot his personal affairs, his party's affairs. He became a poet. He did not doubt the myths of love, the foolish stories of affinities, Paolo and Francesca, Romeo and Juliet. She made him a Platonist. He accepted the illusion that two souls can become one—the futile dream of the ages. She made him a hedonist. His senses dominated his inner life. He was willing to override custom, convention, law, if he might possess her.

He became ridiculous. He had a way of drawing close to her and feeling the texture of her gown, passing it between his fingers like a miller testing flour. He scanned her pumps, her stockings, the lace over her bosom. When she stood up he liked the way the fur piece about her neck fell down over her wide shoulders.

She suffered his adulation with an air of amused exasperation. When she felt his hungry eyes upon her, his gaze was as good to her as sunlight to a plant, sending the blood within her beating to every tiny capillary of her body. She was filled with a cosmic warmth.

She felt a fondness for the gophers that ran in and out of the tree trunks along the river bank.

Yet she did not love him. She hated him. He stank. The odor of his store clothes, soaked with stale smoke of legislative and committee rooms, sickened her. She doubted if he were clean. He seemed, too, to her to be ineffectual, a kind of clawing, embryonic piece of life, undirected, misdirected energy. He had bad manners. His English was abominable. There was nothing attractive about him, no—save the power in his eyes to compel her to look away, a fierceness and a warning.

He amused her, as the lumbering exhibition of a turtle on the shore amused her. He was a phenomenon, just another feature in the eternal circus of existence, to save her from boredom, teas, committees, dancing and theater parties.

So they stood that spring day on the bank overlooking the Mississippi, two sentient bundles of antipathies and attractions, trying to brush away with words the mounting barriers that civilization and diverse environments had laid between them. Early they had learned to be silent together, for then and then only, did they seem to be speaking to each other. When they opened their lips they were strangers.

"Strange, how we got to taking walks together," he remarked.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered casually, but gave him a searching look, as if she would read his thoughts.

"Don't your friends dislike it, Miss Morreson?" he insisted. "And what does your uncle say?"

She felt his mind come back anxiously to this point of attraction, the difference between their stations. It annoyed her. It was something that should not be openly noticed, admitted, least of all discussed. That, she concluded, was part of his boorishness.

"It is none of their business," she remarked coldly. She wanted this to be a hint to him to cease speaking about this—yes, this class difference.

But he could not. Guiltily his mind returned to it, played over it, drew back from it in fear.

"It's funny, don't you think, Miss Morreson, that it could happen just this way?" he continued.

"Don't you think, Mr. Minturn, that is something pretty much in your own mind?" She was curting. . . .

After that, there were night excursions. He refused to go with her in her car. She humored him, and found it more exciting, and better for her figure to walk. . . . Once they came upon a tiny park, deserted now under the brilliant sky. There were swings hanging from bars. A spirit of play seized them. Agatha cried, "Let's swing."

He watched her get into the seat, and he gave her a push. As the pendulum got up motion, she was delighted, laughing merrily like a child. He caught glimpses of her upper legs as she darted past him through the air. He was stirred deeply.

Agatha was possessed with the notion that they must swing together "just like kids." So he got up with her, and slowly they began to pump. She was strong, he found. . . . Higher and higher they mounted until their feet as they swung up were almost on the level with the bar. The air surged from their lungs ecstatically. They were flying together. . . . Suddenly their bodies met. The contact was electric.

"Quick," Agatha said, "get me down, I'm getting sick."

When he lifted her down, he found her trembling, and her eyes were strangely lit.

They found a warm, grassy bank and sat down. Their tongues were unloosed, and for the first time they began to talk together about sex—nakedly but objectively.

To Agatha it was a dirty business, gross, earthy.

"Proof of the infinite discords of nature. . . . Nature is so unaesthetic, you know."

To Dan it was the glorifying principle of life—mystery, adventure, romance—a thing that made women adorable, lovable, in fact, endurable.

"Women would be only bric-a-brac without this function. It makes them equal to men. It is their work. It is earthy, but that's the glory of it."

"I don't care. I shall never have a child—growing in me like a tumor."

Dan was amazed.

"My mother had seven," he said simply. "Three died."

He thought of his mother now differently, as something growing like a tree, bearing good fruit, and he thought of Agatha as a flower, shedding fragrance for a little while from a vase.

He was colder toward her now. She did not seem so essential to him. As she talked, he saw her as he had not seen her before, an infinitely intricate mechanism of such delicacy that she shrank from life. And with this shrinking came corroding cynicism, delicate, too, but all pervading, extending to all things, to all persons, to God himself.

"God must have been a man," she asserted gently, "or he never would have made women bear the children. Women have the bad end of the business, twist it and turn it the way you will."

This seemed nonsense to Dan. It seemed morbid. It seemed indecently selfish. It was the philosophy of consumption without production applied to marriage.

He looked at her. She was strong, with full bosom and lithe, supple limbs. Her hands, though immaculate, were not delicate. She was a full-blown woman, ripening, and beautiful, but she feared kisses and children.

"Let's go," he said, "I must get back to work."

"I've disappointed you," she answered with her slow smile, teasing and aloof.

"Yes."

"Well, I don't care," she responded. "What I say is true, and if you were honest as you pretend to be, you would admit it."

"I admit nothing," he answered angrily. "You are a coward, a sheltered. . . ."

She gasped. What was he saying? There it was again, that class thing dangling between them no matter which way they turned.

They went home in silence.

§

Dan tried to stay away from Agatha after that. She often appeared in the House gallery, a bit of color in otherwise drab surroundings, and inevitably his eyes searched her out. When their eyes met, she smiled. He turned back to his desk warmed and enervated.

He heard that Billy Wentz had married. Billy receded from his mind. He could not dismiss Goodnite so readily. . . . When he awoke mornings in his ugly room, he was at times filled with positive pain at the thought of Agatha. He could not imagine her in this room, and yet he had an ungovernable desire to have her there. He could not rationalize their relationship.

"She's Senator Gaylard's niece."

He became a sentimental adventurer, accepting Agatha as a piece of inexplicable good fortune to be enjoyed without questioning why or whence from day to day . . .

Days passed, long gestating days, when the northering sun drifted up the heavens. One morning on a street car he heard his name mentioned. Two men with dinner pails were talking. He listened with acute attention.

"She's old Gaylard's niece," one of the men said.

"Gone crazy has he?"

"I don't blame him. She's some—" Here the man inserted an obscene phrase that made Dan flush, and left him weak with shame and anger. He became aware of their coarseness. It accentuated his own inferiority.

§

The incident drove him into a resolve to break with her, and like the proverbial drunkard he decided to swear off by taking one last drink. He won her consent to go to Minnehaha park.

"Oh, that's lovely, Dan," she told him. "I haven't been there since a child."

Dan insisted that they take a street car. On their way to the car line, as they passed a jewelry store, Agatha went in and came back with a new wrist watch—a costly, ornate thing.

"I left mine at home," she explained, "and I must see that you get me back on time, sir."

"Did you buy it?" he asked, his face suddenly haggard.

"Why certainly." She was laughing. "Now what are you cross about, granny?"

"Oh nothing." Dan could hardly speak filled as he was with a sense of despair, and baffled rage. . . .

Agatha's child-like amusement at everything at the park—the statue of Hiawatha and Minnehaha, the Falls, the lovers shamelessly exchanging caresses, the refectory where one could buy old-fashioned taffy and pop-corn—filled Dan with elation.

"If she isn't like a wonderful child herself," he commented.

They drifted from point to point, and finally toward twilight found themselves in the hollow cut by the stream. Dan gathered twigs and driftwood and kindled a fire.

"Oh, how nice," she exclaimed. "I wish we had brought some wieners and buns."

"Chicken and waffles you mean," he replied sullenly.

"That wasn't nice, Mr. Representative," she answered.

The poise of her. Despite her ultra-modern frock, she was older than time, unfretted and unmoved. His spirit drew away from hers wondering.

Suddenly Dan yearned to wound her; he desired to break through the hard surface of her calm, and perturb her spirit as his own was agitated.

"Agatha," he began, "you're a cool piece."

"Do you think so, Mr. Minturn? Why, pray? Do you want me to cry a little on order for you?"

"It's because you have never wanted for a thing in your life, I think."

"Do you think so? You speak with a good deal of authority, having known me for almost two weeks."

"I know you all right," he insisted rudely, "better than you know yourself. I know your inexhaustible love for luxury, and your tenth-century notion that there is a superior class."

"A speech, a speech. The gentleman from Hennepin County has the floor."

"Shut-up, Agatha. Don't be a fool." He was thoroughly aroused. "Didn't you go into a jewelry store just now and lay down \$50 for a watch which you did not need?"

"No, you're mistaken. I charged it."

"Which is worse."

"You're insufferable, sir. If you are going to act the boor you are, I'm not going to stay and listen." She arose and turned up the darkening glade. Suddenly she felt Dan's hands on her shoulders. He pushed her down beside the fire again.

"No, you're not going," he said fiercely. "You're going to listen to me."

He saw a shadow of fear cross her face; then she laughed gaily.

"Oh, very well, Mr. Minturn. Anything to accommodate a gentleman."

For a moment, he felt as if he could strangle her, but the immediate recollection of her soft shoulders under his hands loosened his pain, and he relaxed. He arose and put a branch on the fire.

"Agatha," he said, when he had returned, "I know a woman who lives not a half-dozen blocks from you in Minneapolis, who has never ridden on a Pullman car, who has had but one dress a year, and that a cotton dress, who never heard a grand opera, who never has had one day of leisure or joy in the thirty years of her married life, and who doesn't know books, or art, or anything.

"Why Agatha, she has never had the nice things that a woman likes; linens for her table, china for her cupboard, laces and lacey curtains." He paused, shaken with feeling.

"Her soul has died under the slow deprivation of her body. I know we are like that, like a tree dying, when we have no leaves."

"What has this to do with me?" she wanted to say, but something in the dejection of his figure, as he hovered over the blaze, made her cautious.

"She's my mother, Agatha."

The acknowledgement came from him like a cry. She felt something loosen in her own heart. She leaned forward and put her hand upon his knee.

"Poor old Dan," she said.

With that, his antagonism left him. Leaning over, he drew her to him, whispering: "Agatha, I love you more than anything else on earth. Do you know it?" She lay passive in his arms.

The fierceness of his will burning against her quiet

will filled her with satisfaction. She looked past his bowed head and saw a yellow star caught in the branches of a tree. It seemed inconsequential. The sky, the earth, all peoples, all civilizations, all things burned away before the fierceness of his desire for her. She was woman desired. That was enough. . . .

Going home, she accepted his kisses and gave kisses in return.

§

The next morning Alice Miller burst into Dan's office at the capitol, locked the door behind her, and excitedly shook a newspaper in his face.

"Did you see this?" she demanded.

"No. What? Why, Alice, how are you?"

"This!"

She pointed to an item in the society columns, one of those "it is rumored" kind.

"It is rumored that Miss Agatha Lucretia Morreson, niece of Senator Matthew Gaylard," etc., is soon "to announce her engagement to Representative Daniel Minturn."

He laughed outright. It filled him with such joy.

Alice misunderstood his laughter.

"You've got to deny it."

"Why deny it?"

"It will hurt your chances for reelection."

He was graver now. She recalled him to his obligation to her.

"To think," she said, "that they'd resort to that kind of propaganda."

"But, Alice, it's not propaganda."

"Not propaganda?"

He surveyed her little figure, her shop-worn clothes, her serious, excited eyes. Slowly understanding dawned in her troubled face.

"Aw, Dan, you love her!" There was grave feeling in her voice.

"Yes, I do." He was deliberate, indifferent to her pain.

Alice drew back, white and embarrassed, pain and bitterness distorting her face.

"Oh, you fool!" she cried. "Don't you see their game?"

Her voice was husky, hard and disagreeable. She was never more distasteful to him, and yet he pitied her from the bottom of his heart. He saw the pathos of her position. Here she was thinking his contemplated marriage with another woman a mere political lie.

"Listen, Dan," she went on excitedly. "Yesterday, I was selling some goods to two dames. They were talking, not minding me. I didn't pay any attention to their line until I heard them mention your name, and that Morreson woman.

"Aw, what do ye think they said? You're the talk of Lowry Hill, my fine bird. Agatha Lucretia Morreson is framing on you. They know it. All Pillsbury Avenue knows it. Everybody knows it but you."

"You're crazy, Alice," he said: yet she saw her words had shaken him.

"Yes, I'm crazy, Daniel Minturn. I'm the one who's lying, not her. I'm crazy, not you. I'm making this yarn up for propaganda. Sure. Miss Morreson didn't meet with a party of her pals one afternoon and bet \$500 she could rope you in in two weeks, did she? That's a lie, I'm fabricating. It's not all a joke with her; no, it's dead serious. She's marrying you for your money, I suppose. You're not her laughing stock."

She leaned back to survey the havoc of her words. There was havoc, inasmuch as what she said seemed more plausible to him, more of this world, than Agatha's love.

"God, you can be nasty, Al."

Her words had taken hold. She saw them swirling in his mind, whipping his body into tremors, and breaking his will, until she thought he, too, would break.

"Dan, I'm sorry you're such a fool."

"I don't believe it," he answered defiantly.

"Ask her."

"We'll see."

In half an hour Dan was facing Agatha across a tea table at the Pioneer Hotel.

§

"Now he knows," Agatha thought, as soon as she saw him striding into her presence so distraught. She drew back within herself and waited.

"Agatha," he asked, without preliminaries, "is it true that you bet certain girls \$500 that you could make a fool of me?"

"Yes."

"Then I ought to kill you," he interrupted.

"Why don't you? That's the way they do it in the movies, sir. But, then, what would you do for a wife?"

He looked up perplexed. She was sitting against the soft light of the great window, her pale green gown accentuating her loveliness. She was smiling.

"You have no heart, Agatha. But you are surely the most beautiful thing I ever saw."

"No, I have no heart," she breathed. "I gave it away—yesterday."

He did not hear her. He was humped in a chair disconsolate, his youth gone. "Agatha, how could you do a thing as cruel as that?"

"Dan, it was as you think in the beginning," she declared considerably. "I did bet Maggie Tollefer some money that I could make you make love to me. That was after your great speech on the anti-injunction bill.

We were all there to hear you. I did plant myself in your office. In other words, I threw myself at your head, sir; and now you come to upbraid me."

"To make me your laughing stock . . . for some low political purpose." He was pacing the floor now.

"No, not that. Uncle knew nothing about it. Honest, Dan."

"I might have known," he went on. "You are a frivolous set. Oh, if I could only make you suffer too!"

"You will, I dare say." Her eyes were filled with sudden tender light.

"So, it's all over."

"It's just begun, Dan. I'm going on with it. I have been trying to tell you."

"You mean you really love me?" He turned toward her perplexed, not knowing whether to believe or disbelieve.

"Seriously, I don't know whether I love you or not. From the beginning I felt you pull me, or why should I have undertaken this fool game. But I want to go on, Dan, on and on. I get so tired of the endless round of things. I don't know whether I love you. I don't know whether I can love any one. I'm selfish, Dan. I'm perplexed. But I want to go on. Will you take me with you on those terms?"

Dan felt new concern. In one way, what she was saying was worse than the absolute knowledge that she had tricked him. With him it was all or nothing. He wanted her to love as he loved—desperately, magnanimously. He recalled what Abner Rakov had said to him weeks before. "We love to escape boredom." If Dan was not to be her laughing stock, his heart argued, then he was to be her excitement and adventure.

He spoke.

"Agatha, I cannot go back."

When she felt his kiss, and the restless beat of his heart against her side, she pitied him.

§

Ironically for Minturn, when he returned to the Capitol that day he learned that the anti-injunction bill had been defeated in his absence.

Hurst, watchful for Dan's withdrawal, had suddenly brought it out of the committee on special orders, scattered the opposition, and completely shelved the measure.

§

Agatha filled his days.

Sometimes as he watched her with grave eyes it seemed as if he saw her clothes dissolve and melt from her, and that she stood before him, fur-clad, a beautiful, sleek animal. And he was glad.

Sometimes he saw her retreat from him into a background of living green, her eyes sheathed in mystery, her voice incantation, a druidical majesty to be worshipped, not possessed. She was adventure. Always she brought him romance, a sense of sharp difference from the mean life he had always known. She made him think of travel to far ports, and filled him with realization of strength and power.

But most of all, Agatha fed him with beauty. All his life he had been searching for that, it seemed, the peace of will her beauty gave him at every glance.

CHAPTER IX

AGATHA'S LOVE FOR DAN

THE Gaylards' went to their summer home at Lake Minnetonka late in May. Agatha liked it the best of their several residences. The windows of her spacious bedroom opened into the green foliage of maple trees which strained the morning light before it fell into patterns on warm Persian rugs. Birds built their nests in these trees, and the sound of the lake, like domestic music, played slow accompaniment to all one's thoughts. Here she came after her passionate friendship with Dan Minturn, and here she tried to repossess that experience in her thoughts.

"I have come home to get caught up with myself," she told her Uncle Matt.

"To come to your senses, I hope," he answered, not unpleasantly.

One morning soon after her arrival she lay in bed watching skeins of sunlight tangle themselves in the leaves. She had awakened with the clear sense of Dan's proximity. That was it. His will drew her against her will. He commanded her allegiance despite resistance. She wondered if she did not still hate him. She did at times, she concluded. She shrank from the ordeal of introducing him to her friends. Even Maggie Tollefer hadn't met him yet. She often doubted the wisdom of her resolve to marry him. She had gone to bed twice with headaches trying to see her way out of the dilemma of having a brilliant church wedding without having Dan's family. Yet she did not break with him. The fierceness of his desire for her drew her back, fascinated.

She fell to wishing he was coming down today instead of next month. She was anxious to see how he looked in a bathing suit, and she wanted to discuss with him the question whether their wedding day should be September 20 or October 2, and smiled at herself for coupling such irrelevancies.

She confessed to herself in that moment that there was something physical about her love for Dan. "Perhaps that is all there is to it," she told herself. "What else could there be? I don't want children."

She had risen from her bed and thrown aside her pajamas, and was preparing to don her bathing suit for a morning plunge. She caught a glimpse of her nude body in the bevelled glass of the French doors.

She was filled with sickening fear. Suppose it was all a horrible mistake. Suppose she would hate to have him touch her. Suppose that they could not make marriage go. Divorce! Suppose Dan persisted in his crazy politics and uttered shocking things at dinner parties. Her apprehension increased.

She sank down upon a stool, throwing her bathing suit over her shoulders, shivering, not with cold, but in a kind of delirium of fear.

"Oh!" she groaned.

There now began a battle between her natural desire and her social instinct. Yes, she wanted Dan. But on what terms did she want him? Was he just another want—like an automobile? She could not remember when, as a grown woman, she had not had her wants satisfied. There was her desire for a speed boat. Uncle Matt got that, just as he had got her a Stutz roadster and built her a Little Theatre on his Minnetonka estate. The Little Theatre had not been opened in three years. One tires of that sort of thing so quickly. Could she have Dan and not have him? Could she forbear not to have him at all, to forego one desire of her lovely body?

Could she shut Dan out as she had closed the Little Theatre?

Fear ruled her. She began to be afraid that she would not marry him. And what of him? He would kill himself. She did not doubt that. And the thought pleased her. But she could not follow such gruesome speculations. Oh, what could she do?

"I wager if I wait until fall I'll never marry him," she commented shrewdly.

There was a knock at the door, and a maid appeared.

"Wait a moment, Marie," Agatha requested, reaching for her negligee.

"Have you had your plunge, Miss Agatha?" Marie asked, after respectfully withdrawing and re-entering.

"No. My head aches, Marie."

"Here's a letter for you, miss."

It was from Dan. She opened it."

" . . . when I think about our love at all I cannot understand it. How it could come to me I do not see. All I can do is to accept it as I do the sun and air, and it is as vital to me."

"Marie," Agatha said, after reading to the end. "Will you get Mr. Minturn on the phone for me?"

When she spoke to Dan she said: "Dan, I think it is foolish to wait until autumn. Let's get married at once. Next week—tomorrow."

CHAPTER X

THE WEDDING JOURNEY

THEY were married quietly. A few guests, Maggie Tollefer, a Doctor Willard Joyce, and some friends of Senator Gaylard, with Bob Minturn, and Ralph Ramsey, and their wives, made up the party. Dan asked his mother and father to come, but they refused.

"You go along, Danny," his mother had said. "It's nice of you to want me, but I have nothing to wear, and even if I did, I wouldn't go. I'd be in hot water all the time." Then with tears in her eyes, she added, "I'd shame you, that's what I'd do."

"No, no, mother, you couldn't. Don't say that," Dan responded. But secretly he was glad that he did not have to reconcile the opposing houses.

Old Tom Minturn was a great comfort to Dan. He sought his son out in Dan's office down town, and talked earnestly about his boy's approaching marriage.

"You did right," he stated, "to marry a lady. There is nothing like money to help a man succeed."

The old man was enveloped in a haze of reminiscence. Falteringly then, he told Dan about Sadie Truxton, his first wife. "She was a lady, Dan." His mind made wide detours, and brought back strange nuggets of philosophy, and half-inarticulate memories. He rehearsed bluntly the episode in the little Canadian mining town, how Sadie was delivered of a boy, how she and the babe had died, and that silent burial under the stars. Old Tom showed no sign of emotion save in the subdued, monotonous quaver of his voice. As he talked Dan saw him, for the first time, as he must have been as a young

man, before life and toil had mortised him into a hard mould.

"Poor old Dad," Dan said as he seized his father's hand and wrung it. "Why didn't you tell me this before?"

"I don't know, boy. It sorta died in me, I guess, until your marrying and all made me think on it again. . . ."

But when Tom had gone, Dan found that his father's story had had another effect upon him. It filled him with peculiar resentment. It seemed as if Tom was being untrue to his second wife, was crowding her out of his heart, by the idealized memory of the other woman.

"They have made mother what she is," he thought hotly, "and now they all shrink from her."

And the thought gave him no peace. It came back to plague him with a strange, withering application to himself. . . .

It became a problem of the lovers before their marriage to have Dan's parents meet Agatha. This was not so difficult in the case of old Tom, for it could be accomplished by bringing Agatha and Dan's father together downtown. But in case of Mother Minturn it was another question. Finally Agatha suggested that she take her for a ride. This seemed the most tactful means of introduction. Dan knew that neither woman would be comfortable in having Agatha go into the Minturn house. So Dan arranged to have his mother on the curb as Agatha drove up in her Stutz one afternoon. . . .

Dan wished to his dying day that Agatha had kissed his mother.

Both women were embarrassed. Agatha stepped out of the car, and smiling, placed her hands on the older woman's shoulders.

"So this is Dan's mother," she said kindly.

"Yes, Dan's old ugly mother, Miss."

There followed a moment of embarrassment filled by Dan's bustling attempt to get them into the car. Then they were off.

"She couldn't talk, Dan," Agatha told him afterwards. "She was frightened to death, I think, not so much at me, as at the car. She was afraid I was going to dash into the curb."

Dan was waiting for them, when they returned. He kissed his mother tenderly as he lifted her from the machine.

"I love you, mamma, just as I used to," he whispered.

§

Like all brides, Agatha had her cry after the ceremony—a few tears of angry protestation.

"It was a joke-wedding," she declared, while she and her husband were throwing some last articles into a traveling bag. "Dan, remember this, will you? You have married a woman for whom everything turns into a joke—everything. Even my wedding was as frivolous as a circus. Did you hear Maggie Tollefer snicker? I'll never forgive her. If it hadn't been for that nice Dr. Joyce who always is so dignified, I believe it would have been a farce. Why didn't you try the ring on before the ceremony, goosie? I thought it never would fit. But the flowers were nice, and Old Pastor McKnight a dear, don't you think so? Dear old uncle Matt, did you see what he gave us?"

Uncle Matt had given them a very handsome check indeed.

After a good deal of discussion, they had decided to take what Agatha told her friends was a "modest wedding journey." She had found Dan taking an unreasonable attitude toward her proposal to go to Italy. Dan was obsessed with the idea that he must hurriedly

open an independent law office, and what was more, that he, the bridegroom, must defray the expense of the wedding journey.

"Uncle will give us that as a wedding gift," she had explained.

"Do you want me to lose my self-respect?" he had answered.

The upshot of three weeks' discussion was that Dan had decided to accept money from Agatha as a loan.

"You can easily pay it back when you open your office. Uncle Matt can turn you lots of business."

They were to go to Duluth, take a boat east to Detroit, thence by steamer to Chicago. In the first skirmish between husband and wife, both had made concessions, but Dan felt Agatha had won. She and his own desire to have a "regular wedding trip" had come off victorious.

"Dan will take lots of managing," she told Maggie Tollefer at the station, "but it's going to be lots of fun after he gets over being so sensitive about everything."

Dan did feel that Agatha was doing "lots of managing" and having made her understand that this was his wedding journey, too, she withdrew from so obvious participation in the details of the arrangements. When they arrived at Duluth, after a tête-a-tête on the train, they found that a convention of Elks had invaded the town and had pretty successfully occupied every decent room in the place. Dan had neglected telegraphing for reservations. He had planned to get a room at one of the better second-class hotels, but these were all taken. He inquired at the premier establishment and found that a bridal suite was available, but it seemed extravagant to lay down \$25 for one night's entertainment, and so he looked for and found a room at a respectable third-rate hotel.

When Agatha saw the room, as she afterwards told Maggie Tollefer, she "wanted to scream."

"My wedding journey, like my wedding, was rapidly

taking on the aspects of a burlesque show or an Elk's convention," she described it.

But Agatha said nothing. They had dinner in the dining room of the best hotel, and afterwards went for a walk—at her suggestion. Dan was for going to their room at once.

They escaped from the congested streets, and soon had passed out of the zone of convention festivity into the dark upper avenues that encircle the cliffs which mark the city's boundaries. As they turned to look back from that height, Agatha gave a gasp of delight. A panorama of swinging street lights, factory glare, furnace glow, cars and trains against the blue void of the lake, where the breakwater burned like a fiery necklace. Round them trembled the faint reverberations of the busy world; before them lay the hush of the inland sea, which was as much sky as sea. Husband and wife sat down in the stillness feeling as one throbbing mind. They sat down together, conscious of the eternal ache of love, its permanency above the clangor and fluctuation of the world. Agatha sat on the lower step in the ascending walk, between Dan's outspread knees; his arms were about her shoulders.

"You make a nest for me, love," she whispered.

"Always."

"Tomorrow we shall be way over yonder in that blue nothingness," she continued.

"Together."

"To think," she went on, "that we can have all this together. Oh, Dan, I feel that we are going to have a perfectly adorable wedding journey."

They watched the skies above them, and marvelled at the black jagged cliff cut deeply against the brilliant sky. They sat for an hour waiting, and murmuring quaint fancies, and kissing. They seemed very near to each other. They seemed very far from the world which rolled and gesticulated at their feet.

"Dan," Agatha at length whispered, "will you let me make just one little suggestion?"

"A dozen."

"Please change our room. We don't want anything to mar the beauty of all this, and somehow I just can't go back to that noisy, dingy old place. And get two rooms, dear. You won't mind tonight. I'm tired."

Dan consented. Long afterwards he realized that it represented a futile little crisis in their relationship which was of big import. He never blamed her, but he secretly concluded that she had quite unconsciously taken advantage of a beautiful moment to gain the upper hand in their strife over physical things.

"But what's the difference," he always concluded. "We lived while we were sitting there. That hour above the glare and stir of Duluth was our marriage."

§

Dan did not sleep well. The strange room, the noise of the street, the switching engines in the train shed across the thoroughfare, the deep, hoarse barking of freighters from the lake, above all else, his restless heart, without Agatha in his bed, kept his mind disturbed. At the first light of day, he was up and standing at the window.

Nature was in a festive mood. The great, blue, white-stained sea was leaping and laughing in the sunshine; gulls careened in the wide reaches of the upper air; and there towering above the warehouses was the beautiful white ship that was to take them on the journey. Dan thought that he had never seen a sight more exhilarating and harmonious.

He dressed quickly, and without going to Agatha's room, went down to the street. Something impelled him toward the steamship. He must see it, he resolved, as it lay smoking at the pier, so tireless from its long

night-flight over the waters. He walked toward it, his heart laughing. The sun was in his face. How strangely and quietly the big boat had nosed its way into the wharf. The spell of seeing things was on him. He thought: "I have never had such a good time in my life."

He went toward it. On the long, wooden bridge leading to the pier, a man accosted him, a foul person, with grease and dirt on his worn clothes, and a crumpled hat over his eyes.

"Say, Mister, can you give a pal the price of a breakfast?"

Already Dan's hand was covering the loose change in his pocket.

He felt his heart contract, and a flush of guilt and shame flood his body.

"Isn't there plenty of work, partner?" he asked.

"No, been walkin' the streets for days. They say it's this way everywhere, even in the country." The man's voice was sullen and old.

Before Dan's eyes the dazzling beauty of lake and ship faded, and he saw the dreary disorder of the bread line, and the inchoate mass of jobless workers. . . .

He gave the man a handful of silver, and stood watching him as he slouched up the bridge, and shuffled into a cheap eating house. Then he turned and went slowly back to the hotel.

§

"Retreat and resist," something in Dan said. He suddenly became aware that an inner change, not immediate, but impending for months had consummated itself within him. He saw how men grow old, battle-worn, not suddenly, not consciously, but noiselessly, ineluctably, until they were dying inwardly before they were aware. That, he told himself, was the way life had passed his mother. . . .

Climbing tiers of red houses against the blue sky, Duluth was fading behind them, as the Northland leaped against the foam. It was a merry moment. Below, the ship's orchestra was playing a jazz dance of which Dan did not know the name. There was animation on deck, a pleasant stir of festive colors as men and women in gay shawls took the deck chairs. Dipping, majestic gulls, white-capped waves, the rhythmical "chug, chug" of the engines, the city distant, sinking from them in the sunlight, like a crumbling image in a dream, these were spread, it seemed, for Dan's particular entertainment. . . .

"I never get tired of this view," Agatha said.

"I don't think I should either," he answered.

Dusk came swiftly. The shore-line faded out. They were alone on the sea. Something dropped from Dan. It was as if he had said "good-bye" to some past forever. He thought of his mother.

§

Within three hours after their embarking, the "Northland" was battling desperately with one of the precipitate squalls for which Lake Superior is famous. The boat, though in no great danger, pitched and tossed in the trough of the choppy sea. The gale drove three-fourths of the passengers to their berths. Even some of the crew were sick. Dan escaped. Agatha crumbled up before the onslaught, and lay, a limp, will-less, complaining child in her bed. Her damp hair made a copper pool for her to lie in. Her mouth lost its firmness, her eyes their luster, her cheeks without their careful grooming looked pale, in texture coarse. She was petulant, whimpering. Yet even in her discomfiture, the proud grace of her body, the comely strength of her, could not be concealed. Dan marvelled at her physical loveliness.

Her air of mastery of self and life was gone. Nausea

seemed to have severed all the stern bands of control she had severely set about herself. Masks tumbled down. She was no longer Agatha Morreson, niece of Senator Matt Gaylard, but just a girl, weak and a little disgusting. She seemed to sense something of his reaction.

"My God, Danny, you must get me off this boat, or you'll lose whatever love you have for me," she said. "Please go out. I'll be all right."

Dan sat in a steamer chair outside her door thoughtfully. He heard her retching. It all had happened before, he told himself. Many a night he had listened to his mother like that. Agatha like his mother? That golden, charming mistress of life, like his mother? . . . Gusts of winds shook his chair. Through the portholes, red-flashes of lightning—a heaving sea—far-off, indistinct, hoarse bellowing of fog-horns—the pour of rain over the decks—a warm sheltered feeling of being inside—exaltation at the sight of nature on a great jag, staggering to the tattoo of rain and thunder.

For the first time, doubts came to Dan about his love for Agatha. The suggestion intruded itself that he go away from her—now—slip off absurdly into the night and storm, and disappear. After all, she was not his wife yet. Would she ever be? Would Agatha ever really surrender to him?

Every half hour or so, he shook himself free from his drowsy broodings and went in to her. Once he was aroused by the sound of her weeping.

Morning. Leaden sky and turbulent angry gray waters. Georgian Bay with its stony promontories, and desolate, lonely islands of rock in tune with the gray grandeur of cloud-swept sky and storm-swept sea.

Agatha was asleep at last. Dan shook himself and went out on deck. A tone-poem in gray. Fresh, spray-filled air welcomed him. His spirit responded to the boundless sweep of sky and water. A stewardess, an Irish girl, was passing from stateroom to stateroom,

her short skirts billowed about her legs, just lifted to reveal her pretty, bare knees. She leaned against the wind joyously, her frank, unafraid eyes upon Dan. She was clean, rain-rinsed, friendly; strong as life, a part of sea and nature; so unlike Agatha. She stirred him deeply. His eyes followed her. He thought: "I might have married a girl like that—one of my own class." . . .

Agatha grew better, but did not try to rise. Dan prowled the wind-swept decks. . . .

There was a strange, morose, motionless figure that stretched itself under a rug in a steamer chair. Dan passed him time and again as he paced the deck. This fellow, diminutive, frail, with gray about the temples, thin mustache, and dark, fixed eyes, paid no more attention to the bounding sky-line, or the waters than if he were sitting at home in his sun-room. He poked at a book with his inquisitive nose all day.

Once when Dan passed him, he raised his eyes. The next time, as Dan paused, in his tramping, he spoke. It was easy to talk after that. In the course of a long, circumambulatory conversation, the man said: "Being on shipboard is like belonging to an army. You give yourself over to an absolute dictatorship. Your bodily wants are looked after; the captain and pilot do the thinking for you, and everybody is on the same footing of equality, all in the same boat, you know. That's why a voyage is such a good rest. It's better than a hospital."

Dan found it a new idea.

"You know," the stranger said, renewing the theme, "equality is what's destroying us here in America. We are organized like a mob rather than like a ship. We have no captains and no pilots."

Hereupon he began to read without ceremony from his book: "Every improvement of the type of man has been the work of an aristocratic society, and it will always be so—a society with a long hierarchy of rank and

differences among men and based on slavery in one sense or another."

He turned over pages rapidly and flung aphorism after aphorism at his eager and astonished listener.

"The new table, brethren, I put up for you. Be hard.

"In itself an act of injury, violation, exploitation or annihilation cannot be wrong," he continued, "for life operates essentially and fundamentally by injuring, violating, exploiting and annihilating, and cannot even be conceived of as existing otherwise. . . ." "Wisdom that," the little man declared in a kind of rhapsody of the reason.

"Life is essentially the appropriation, the injury, the vanquishing of the unadapted and weak," he quoted again.

"I read from the new Ten Commandments," he explained. "Nietzsche, my boy, is the antidote of democracy, a savior for an age, in which man, springing out of a welter of Darwinian nonsense, lost all self-respect. . . ." He referred to his book. "I teach you the superman. Man is something that shall be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass him?"

The bitter, tonic words fitted well the little man and the austere background of scudding gulls, gray waters and stone-clad shores.

Night came. Dan had more time to think. His mind ran back over his life and the persons that filled it: Hugh, the eternal interrogation point of his soul that would not be answered; Alice Miller, Bricktop. What if he had married one of these? That beggar at the wharf; the legislature. Goodnite—damn him—Andrewson. How bitter was the defeat of the anti-injunction bill—how crushing! The little girl, the unknown girl, who had cried because he had kissed her; Senator Gaylard, whom he had come to respect deeply.

"Governor Minturn, Governor Minturn," he heard in the throb of the engines. He heard the old call.

He walked to the stern of the boat and watched the leagues of water churn over the propeller. Behind, in the wind-swept distance, was home, his mother in her accustomed chair—the chair over which he and Hugh had fought. The picture faded. His mother was harder to visualize amid the splendor of the Northland.

He went back to Agatha. She was lying as he had left her, but she smiled as he came in.

"Come near me, dear," she demanded. "Hold me tight." Ah, the warmth of her! They were silent. He kissed her. They talked. He told her about the light-houses on isle and bluffs, and the man who had read Nietzsche to him.

"I am not interested in Nietzsche," she said. "I am interested in you." She pulled him down beside her.

"You know, dear," she began gravely, "how one thinks things when one is sick—mad things. I dreamed I was going to die. The pain of it, Dan. I felt so—so—incomplete." She paused. "My husband," she went on passionately, "I acted meanly in Duluth. . . . What if I had died, Dan?"

He held her to him.

"But, dear, you can't realize how all my life I have hated men—no, not men—myself, my open, raw nature, so vulnerable, so powerless against them, against you, Dan. . . . I am so weak." She hid her face against his shoulder. She trembled.

They left the boat at Mackinac, that jade jewel in the open sea. They found a hotel room that opened on the bay. They could see the stars drop into the blue as they lay clasped in each other's arms, oblivious of time and space.

They took train to Chicago. They went to the Drake, at Agatha's suggestion. Dan made no objection. He had begun to accept the perquisites of Agatha's class as his own.

That night they dined in the great dining-room, with

its classic atmosphere. Somewhere far away amidst the Ionic columns an orchestra was playing. From the window they looked down upon thronged Sheridan Road and to the open Lake. Men and women, flushed with health and well being, dazzling with jewels, sat at table. Agatha was aglow with the splendor. To Dan she had never looked so charming.

"You order for me," she asked softly, and smiled at him across the table. Dan gave the order crisply with the right *sang froid* to the obsequious waiter. Agatha lit a cigarette. The orchestra began its fantasy again. Dan leaned back, feeling masterful and strong. Enfolding luxury of a beneficent Providence seemed mysteriously thrown about him. Security is sweet.

This is the setting for her, he thought. This is her world—her world. There was no other. It seemed to him, then, as if there had never been another.

BOOK TWO

AGATHA

CHAPTER XI

THE PAST RETURNS TO AGATHA

REPRESENTATIVE and Mrs. Daniel Minturn are at breakfast in the large and distinguished dining room of the Gaylard home. It is late March. A driving rain lashes the bare boughs of the denuded trees against the bevelled glass of the old-fashioned bow-window. Minturn is reading the morning paper.

"I'm glad you got up, dear," he says to his wife.

"'Arose' is better, Dan," Agatha answers. She is busy operating the electric toaster. As she corrects him her voice is not unkind, only a little fatigued and a trifle accusing. "You haven't slipped into the lower Pillsbury jargon lately," she adds.

"No, I talk almost as well as Gaylard." His voice is cold, no bitterness nor resentment audible.

"You talk much better, and you should. You have twice his ability."

He is somewhat mollified by the compliment.

"At any rate," he tells her, "I am glad you arose and joined me, Mrs. Minturn, over the breakfast cups."

"It isn't necesasry to be funny."

"Only the other day you told me I had no sense of humor, and now you upbraid me for being funny. There is no pleasing friend wife."

"Friend wife is vulgar."

"How many times have I told you that I am vulgar, that I like to be, and that secretly you like to have me be. Now, don't you, friend wife?"

"Let's talk about something more important," she demanded. "Did you get the building permit?"

"I did not. I can't make up my mind that we should build this spring. Materials are way up. The only reason I can see is that it will give the men more work."

"You might think of me," she pouts.

"You're comfortable and happy, and your uncle needs you here. May I have another pear, please?"

"Happy?" she echoes, injecting the first note of seriousness into their conversation. "What does Rakov say in his book about happiness?"

"So you read it, eh? I thought you swore you would not read it?"

"I thought all privately printed books were cheap," she explains.

"And privately made gowns, dear," he counters playfully. "I'll tell you what Rakov says; it's something like, 'Happiness knows not comfort, and has naught to do with pleasure.' But Rakov's a cynic. No fellow loves comfort and pleasure more than he does."

"Save Minturn," she plagues.

"It's in the blood. It's human nature, I guess." He speaks less confidently as if a thought-cloud had floated down over the sunlit inner landscape.

"You haven't eaten your bacon," she admonishes.

"I'm not hungry. You will excuse me?"

He is up before she answers, stands for a moment watching the bare, black boughs stagger before the wind, turns to her and kisses her on the mouth and moves toward the coatroom.

"Don't forget your rubbers," she sings out.

He does not answer, but he finds the rubbers and puts them on mechanically. She follows him to the door.

"By the way," he states, "that definitive edition of Nietzsche is coming out today. It's a beauty."

"Another reason for a new house; that Nietzsche will never fit in here, Dan. Can't we build this spring?" She creeps into his arms, snuggling under his coat like a playful kitten.

"You know what I said," he answers sternly. "I meant it."

"You want me to get old and fat." She is petulant. His hands follow the slim lines of her body tenderly.

"You could stand to be a little fatter, my dear."

"But I don't want babies," she flings out, drawing away from him. "You can't say I didn't warn you. I don't want them and I won't have them."

"I think sometimes, dear, that you get more like a child every day."

He opens the door and goes out. He stands for a moment on the long wet piazza, looking down the empty rain-swept street. Some wistful impression, some half-articulate wish, or fragment of an old dream figuring a different, better universe emanates from that scene. He does not feel quite satisfied with leaving Agatha thus. He goes back. She rushes into his arms.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came back," she cries. "You do love me, don't you? Say it. Say it."

"Yes, baby, I love you."

§

Representative Minturn drives his own car to the office each morning. Today he runs down slowly, that his thoughts may race back and forth around Agatha.

§

"Take this house business," he thought. "Ever since that time I gave in on the Hawthorne place, we have never agreed on the subject." This is what had happened. . . .

They came home from Chicago, vibrant with happiness. In the hotel at Mackinac, and in the days spent at the Drake, they had won something more than a harmony of limbs and lips; they had grown into a comradeship—a league of youth, cemented by the joy of dis-

covering like tastes. To their heightened senses, Chicago had been like some romantic, foreign city, where men like deities existed only as a background against which to project their passion. They had been alone amid luxury, color and the stir of life. They had shopped extravagantly at Field's; they had seen the "Follics" at the Olympic, and Warfield at the Blackstone. They had explored the new Latin quarter above the Rush Street Bridge and had drunk tea out of cracked tea cups at one of the tiny tea rooms along upper Michigan Avenue, kept by the widow of a famous poet. They had visited private art collections, and had purchased several pictures, expensive ones.

Twice Agatha had telegraphed home for money.

Dan had lost his reason, it had seemed. It had been an orgy for him of pent-up instincts and desires. He had not cared for expense. He found himself wanting, wanting. His soul had seemed big enough to embrace all the beautiful things in the world.

How crazy he and Agatha had been for each other. They had made frequent trips to their room during the day, ostensibly to rest, in truth, to be alone together. Poetry had lain about them everywhere.

On their last night at the Drake, they had lain awake looking first out over the lake, with its soft, enfolding mystery, and then out over the Drive, with its clicking, whisking traffic, and something of the greater mystery of the crowd had stolen into their room and sobered them. They had talked passionately, then, about life, and the perplexity of inequality, about the rich and poor.

"Here, far away from the city; here by the yellow dunes,

I will lie and soothe my heart where the sea croons.

For what can I do with strife, or what can I do with hate?

Or the city, or life, or love, or fate?"

So Dan had read to her from a book he had purchased by a new Chicago poet.

"Or the struggle since time began of the rich and poor?
Or the law that drives the weak from the temple's
door?

Bury me under the sands so that my sorrow shall lie
Hidden under the dunes from the world's eye."

"It's so beautiful, it hurts," Agatha had said. She threw her bare arms impulsively round his neck. "I want to be good to you, Dan. I want to be good to you."
He had read to the end.

"I have learned the secret of silence, silence long and deep;

The dead knew all that I know, that is why they sleep.
They could do nothing with fate, or love, or fame, or strife.

When life fills full the soul, then kills life.
I would glide under the earth as a shadow over a dune,
Into the soul of silence, under the sun and moon.
And forever as long as the world stands or the stars flee,
Be one with the sounds of the shore, and one with the sea."

Long after Agatha had fallen asleep, he had lain there thinking about his mother and what he would do when he had returned to Minneapolis. Somehow excitement had flown; the orgy had spent itself . . .

So they came home to Matt Gaylard's house on Pillsbury, or, rather to Susie McEwen's house. Senator Gaylard's wife, Susie McEwen, had been a music teacher in Rush City. When she married Gaylard, then a Representative from Chicago county, and came to the metropolis to live, she refused to employ a decorator, or seek any advice about fitting up the Gaylard home. She

wanted to do it herself, she said, as a housewife should. She wanted none of these new-fangled monstrosities of the modern woman. She did it. The house never recovered. The tiger skin with the gaping jaws on the floor; the innumerable vases; the stiff, heavy furniture; the stiff, heavy oils, not one of them by a master—these things made the Gaylard house shout Susie McEwen at one when one entered.

Agatha hated it, and Dan—but for different reasons. Agatha longed to have her own house to play with, and Dan wanted to escape into a sphere of independence.

Dan went house-hunting without confiding in his wife. Diverging sharply off a busy retail street, he found a neighborhood of lost gentility. Old, imposing houses, many of them now turned into apartments, lined a shady, genteel street. Dan found a good-looking house with a reasonable rent, with the added advantage of being within walking distance from the newly-opened law office.

Agatha finally consented to go and inspect it with him.

"Just to humor you, you monkey."

So it was that one summer afternoon they drove up before the house chosen by Dan. He was at the wheel and waited for her to get out before him. She did not move. Her full lips had set in a determined line; her eyes glowed angrily, and her hands were clinched in her lap.

"Well?" he asked. "Must I crawl over you?"

"Is this the place?" Her voice quavered. "Someone already lives here."

"Yes; but they are going to move," he explained lightly, ignoring her evident distress. "Why, come to think of it, Agatha, their name is Morreson, too."

She winced.

"Yes, that is odd," she answered with unnecessary bit-

teness. "There are only a dozen Morresons in the city directory."

But she had not moved. When he had climbed over her playfully, she had suddenly slipped behind the wheel and driven off, leaving him alone and perplexed in the quiet street. Two blocks away she drew up to the curb and waited.

"You have a damn funny way of being funny," he had told her, on retaking the machine. Then he had seen her face!

"Drive me," she had commanded, "out yonder to the country." In silence they had driven, and did not speak of what was important to them until they had found a road they knew and liked, a tree-arched, unfrequented lane by the river. Here she told him.

"Papa and mamma live in that house."

Her pain had gone; the old defiance had appeared in her voice. She waited as if for him to grow used to the perplexing thought.

"Now don't judge me, Daniel, until you hear me out —." He had listened heavily, amazement driving him into a numbed silence.

"You don't know father," she continued, her mouth hard, her voice velvety. "One of those soft men who defend their softness with the hardness of hard men. Oh, so shiftless. After he had run through mother's money on silly ventures, and started his bookstore, he ruined the little business that he got with his tongue. Mountains of talk on every conceivable subject—theosophy, birth control, socialism, vegetarianism, Voodooism, every-ism. He is a collector of 'isms.' He has a high, shrill, insistent voice, stubborn intellectual pride, and a hasty critical sense that make him the ideal disputant.

"I have seen him stand for hours trying to beat down a customer's opinions with his own, while other cus-

tomers waited to buy books. When I was scarcely out of pinafores, I used to run about the store trying to make up for his deficiencies, and many a time I have come home, gone upstairs, and cried myself to sleep because my papa had such bad manners. . . ." She paused to ruminate. Her smile was ironic.

"I was more a Gaylard than a Morreson, I guess," she had continued, quieter now, plunged into a sea of bitter memories. "It's strange where the ideas that fill children's heads come from, Dan. As far back as I can remember, I thought of myself as a grand lady; and father was so indifferent to clothes. All he cared about was books and his pet ideas. Well, we got poorer. He moved his store from one location to another, until it came to occupy a dingy hole on Washington Street. Here he sat and spun his theories, and left mother and me to starve. . . ."

As she had progressed in the narrative, Agatha became more impersonal—an impersonal fury, lovely and relentless.

"Uncle Gaylard, of course, took care of us two after that. I was about 12 at that time, and when I had finished high school he proposed to send me to Vassar, with the provision that I come and live with him afterwards. He and Aunt Susie did not have children, you know. . . . Father was furious. I'll never forget that day." She tried to laugh. "Father enjoyed a scene. He got us all into the tiny living-room at home and demanded that I choose between him and Gaylard. But first he called uncle everything he could find in his extensive vocabulary—vile names, like 'grafter' and 'lackey to the idle rich.' He seemed to feel that Uncle Gaylard was responsible for all his misfortunes; that he himself had been mistreated, and had never been given a chance. Oh, it was humiliating and terrible."

She had paused here to master memories that seemed too harsh to bear.

"When I told father simply that it seemed best for all of us that I accept Uncle Gaylard's proposal, he grew melodramatic, ordered me out of the house, and disinherited me—not that I could see anything to inherit. . . Well, since then I have seen mother once a week downtown; but father, never. . . . He has moved his shop again, I understand, to the house, the house you were about to rent. Uncle Gaylard keeps them, I guess."

She had ended in shame, tears softening her eyes. Together they had sat in silence, wonderingly. How amazing was the spectacle of their lives stretching backwards in perplexing webs of chance and motive!

"Of course, what uncle did, meant everything to me, everything, college, motor car, travel, decent clothes, and surroundings. . . . You understand, don't you, old dear?"

He had patted her knee, and said, "Poor old thing!"

"Take me," she had directed, "to the top of that hill and let the clean wind blow away all these evil memories. Then we'll slip over to the Country Club and have dinner." And she had added, "Perhaps we can dance a bit."

§

Over the glossy ebon pavements Minturn drives his car towards the office. He turns down a cross street and feeds in the power. "That house business!"

Sitting with him in his Stutz is a phantom passenger, a ghost of an unknown man, who has haunted him since that summer afternoon when Agatha had gone to inspect the old Morreson House on Hawthorne Place. Agatha's father. He appears today, as he has so often before, at the bar of Dan's judgment and pleads for a hearing. "Look at me," he seems to say. "Hear me. It is all so differnt. Please." . . .

From that day to this, Daniel Minturn and his wife have never referred to the elder Morresons again. That

is one of those delicate subjects that contrive to get folded away in human hearts to remain untouched until some crisis forces them out again.

Coming home from the Country Club that fateful day, they had planned their new house—that is, Agatha had begun to erect in fancy the “House of Minturn” on the knoll overlooking the river, where she had told him about the abandoned parental roof.

§

State Representative Daniel Minturn does not go directly to his office yet. He braves the March sleet to have his thinking out. There is another episode to which his mind returns again and again.

§

There was that law office business. Dan had picked out a modest place in the building where George Kimberly had his suite. Agatha had objected, not on any personal grounds.

“It is this way, Dan,” she had explained. “It’s all a matter of business. You go into that old building where Mr. Kimberly is, and clients associate you with his type of practice, and you get his kind of clients. That’s all right, if you want them, but that isn’t where the money is. You might just as well be getting the bigger cases. They are no harder to handle. . . . Oh, honey, I do so want you to succeed,” she had added. “I know how big and fine you are, and I want others to know it, too.”

Agatha had been right—as usual. When he had opened his office in the Tollefer building, business came.

One morning when Minturn had entered his own office, he found ensconced in his swivel chair, comfortably and genially surveying him, none other than Senator

Goodnite. The fat man's face was wreathed in smiles, smiles that spoke of a maddening intimacy of Dan and Dan's affairs.

"Clients usually wait in the outer office when they want to see me," Dan had spoken, coldly.

Goodnite laughed jovially.

"And your friends?" he asked.

"They have the good taste to wait for invitations." The irony was lost on Goodnite. It had no other effect than to make the fat man more casual, if anything in his assurance of a welcome.

"I don't suppose if a friend of yours walked into that door bright and early some morning with a nice, fat remunerative case for you, Mr. Minturn, you'd exactly slam the door in his face, now, would you?" the visitor inquired, as he leaned back in Dan's chair and surveyed the ceiling at which his newly-lighted cigar pointed militantly.

"I want no cases from you."

"Slow up, slow up, my boy," Goodnite had replied, with loss of his accustomed aplomb. "Maybe if you'd take the trouble to find out whom I represent you would sing a different tune."

"There's the door," Dan had thundered.

Goodnite blinked, shuffled his two hundred and eighty pounds in the creaking chair, turned his sobered face toward Dan and said, "Well, now, this is unusual."

Dan did not wait for further negotiations. He jumped toward the bulky intruder. There was a sharp, hard, ludicrous struggle, and Senator Goodnite, huge and red-faced, was soon sprawling on all fours on the office floor.

Dan had the door open. As Goodnite arose, grunting and fuming to pass out, Dan had said, "You thought that you could get away with that old double-crossing stuff, didn't you? Go get another woman to pull your chestnuts out of the fire."

"Why, you damn young fool!"

This did not close the episode. A half-hour later Senator Gaylard himself appeared. He was plainly troubled. There was a long consultation in Dan's office. Uncle Matt explained the serious import of Dan's hasty action. Goodnite represented—here he named a powerful corporation—and was bringing Minturn business. It was a grave error, a grave error. Dan must realize the enormity of his blunder, and as soon as he saw the enormity of his blunder, he would no doubt take steps, like every other gentleman, to rectify his mistake. Dan insisted that he had made no mistake. He had rightly acted toward an "unspeakable crook" who had used a "girl to frame" a political opponent. Uncle Matt brushed that allusion by. Business is business, you know, he pointed out. Goodnite may have distorted notions of what a practical joke is, but he is a fine fellow, a fine fellow, a man of parts. All that a young attorney just starting into business could do, was to call him by telephone and apologize. This, Dan swore, he would not do. There was more consultation. Agatha happened to arrive at the office about this time, and the upshot of the affair was that Dan sent off a letter of bare apology to Goodnite, and the case finally came, sans Goodnite, via a different route. But Dan felt besmirched by the whole miserable business. He felt besmirched now as he drove along the boulevard facing the washed air of the March day.

§

Representative Minturn arrives at his office perplexed yet refreshed—hours late. As he enters the typist nods toward his private office. He starts. On such a morning as this, he had found Goodnite waiting for him. There is someone in his office chair. It is Agatha. She rises, smiling, discharging a glow about the place.

"You're late, you naughty boy," she says.

"To what do I owe the honor of this visit, Madame?"

"Oh, Dan, I just couldn't have you go off that way."

She comes toward him; her hands are on his shoulders. He discreetly closes the office door.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHOICE

WHEN summer came—the short, intensive, northern summer—it found Agatha busy with plans for the new home, and Dan getting ready for the fall campaign. Dan at last gave provisional assent to the erection of the house, the reservation being his election. He had decided to run for Senator from the old 113th, his residence at the Gaylard home affording necessary geographical qualification. He did not expect the indorsement of labor, but he knew that he occupied a strong central position in the district, retaining the allegiance of many of his old supporters, and winning new ones by his unpolitical alliance with the Gaylard family. Dan had spoken half a dozen times in the district since March with pleasant reverberations of public opinion. “A man with an obvious political destiny.” “A brilliant young progressive.” “Not hurt by success.” These were some of the comments. His old supporters, who had looked for a violent apostasy because of his changed fortunes, were disappointed. Minturn thundered against child labor, and legalized restrictions on working men and women with his old fire and zeal. Radicals watching for a misstep watched in vain, until it was discovered that Minturn had not put himself on record on water power legislation. “That is the salient question of the times,” commented the *Unionist*. “What candidates do about the proposed power act will make or break them.” Thus early the gauntlet was laid down.

§

Came a July day that brought pain in its wake. The torrid sun climbed up the coppery sky, and showered its rays down upon steaming streets and buildings, which sent heat waves back again into office and shop. The day's work was practically at a standstill. In offices, where electric fans beat back the humid air, typists and clerks kept perfunctorily at work. Long ago, managers and proprietors had laid off, and driven to the lakes for relief. Firemen had been ordered into the less open sections of the city to open hydrants that boys and girls might find refreshment in artificial showers. The downtown streets were empty, save for perspiring, sluggish handfuls, obviously going somewhere, as intently and as leisurely as their legs would let them. These hugged the shady side of the thoroughfares. It was a day hideous with flies and smells, a desert day, propelled from the western plains, it seemed, by an impalpable wind.

Dan stuck doggedly at the brief he was drawing in his twelfth story office. Agatha had telephoned him at noon to urge him to come out to Beechcroft at once. "I wish we had not been fools enough to brave July," she had counselled. "Let's go to the north shore, and on to the Rockies." She added, "Don't forget we dine tonight on the terrace. At 7."

It gave him satisfaction to keep stubbornly at work in the midst of the general lassitude. There was quiet here, too—he had sent the girl away—and solitude, such as he had not had for months. He experienced the quick, fanciful satisfaction of peering down a deep, cool, well, at himself in unplumbed waters.

At 4 o'clock Dr. Willard Joyce came in. Joyce had been best man at Dan's wedding, largely because he was Maggie Tollefer's fiance, and inasmuch as Dan had no groomsman to propose. Joyce was an enthusiastic be-

liever in his own profession, a rare fellow with a warm interest in children, a wide reader, and a bitter protestant against poverty and attendant malnutrition. He and Dan never talked politics. They didn't talk much, that is, together. Dan usually listened while Joyce talked shop.

This afternoon Joyce wanted Dan to go with him on a call, and then drive with him to the Gaylard estate. Dan laid his brief aside.

Twice they were forced to turn out for speeding ambulances, as they hurried north to Sixth Avenue. In some sections, half-naked children were playing in dusty, narrow streets, in the shade of low, decrepit houses, Negroes and whites with childhood's indifference to outward conditions like heat. A narrow strip of shade fell across the burning pavements. Here close to the sheltering walls, old men and women sat and slowly and patiently fanned themselves.

Joyce drew up before a small frame cottage.

"Let me go in, too," Dan suggested.

"I don't know whether it will be safe. I don't come up this way often, and when I do, I never know what I'm getting into. But come on."

They entered a small, dark room, half living and half dining room. A table piled with soiled dishes where flies buzzed, a phonograph, a few chairs and a tattered rug made up the furnishings. Their attention was directed from these to an army cot that evidently had been pushed out from the darker bedroom into the crowded living room. Here lay a child, about three or four years old, its face flushed and swollen, its lungs laboring for breath. The mother, who sat in terrible passivity beside the sick babe arose as Dr. Joyce advanced.

"You better get out of here," Joyce whispered to Minturn. "It looks like diphtheria. Wait in the car."

Dan was glad to flee into the scarcely more inviting street. His heart was pounding. He felt as if an old

internal wound had opened, and was bleeding, drawing off drop by drop his own rich and sustaining life-blood. For a moment he was faint—sick. Then, the mood passed. It was succeeded by a colossal indifference to the dirty, hot street, and the dirty, hot sick-room. His mind raced along ahead to Beechcroft, to Agatha. He wondered if they would have time for a cool plunge before dinner.

Dr. Joyce at length emerged from the house with professional calmness.

"Well, that's that. Now we can get out of this," he added genially. The motor whirled. The car dashed past the shouting children, and the house was left behind. They did not speak much until they had reached the country pavement.

"Could you do anything for it?" Dan asked casually. He had wanted to ask that question for a half hour.

"Two chances out of a hundred to get well," Joyce answered. "I sent it to the General Hospital. They're so ignorant. If I'd been called five or six days ago it would have been a different story. . . ."

The road to Beechcroft turns off sharply from the boulevard and winds pleasantly through cool, twilight woods. This strip of woodland never seemed more welcome than on this afternoon as Joyce and Minturn came home. The checkered shadows on the cropped grass, the long aisles of fragrant bushes, seemed to Dan an ideal place for children to play in.

§

There was much good talk at dinner. John Arnold, merchant, was there; Asa Granville, the banker, Gaylard's particular friend; Hod Tollefer, a large real estate dealer; Maggie's father, as well as a group of odds and ends that Dan did not know well. They sat upon the terrace under the sky. Reservoirs of coolness were un-

locked as the off-shore breeze washed the night clean of the day's heat and fret. The moon was up, and there was the feel of romance in the air—perhaps induced by Matt Gaylard's justly famous liquor. At any rate, the merchant, the banker and Hod Tollefer were pleasantly loquacious. Dan listened as was his wont.

Arnold was a merchant of the old school. He had learned his merchandising at Montreal in the best English tradition. He had culture, dealt in old masters, in fact, dealt so extravagantly that it was said that he neglected his business. He was called old-fashioned by the head of Donton's, and of the younger, more aggressive stores. At present Arnold was in the hands of a receiver, that is, in the hands of Asa Granville. This neither affected his spirits nor his profits. It simply meant that his store was to be reorganized, put on a modern basis, given in charge of a younger type of business executive, be rushed into an extensive advertising campaign, and all that sort of thing. Incidentally he would be released from much worry and work, and be given time for pursuing his hobby, art.

Arnold's benevolent florid face shone with hope and optimism. It was Arnold's idea—he expressed it urbanely—that civilization hadn't ever reached the "pinnacle of perfection" that it had "here in the great Northwest." To his mind, the climate with its extremes of hot and cold; the rich soil, with its varied productivity; the solid citizenry from Canada, Scotland, Germany and Scandinavia, had "conspired to build the greatest empire of profits and usefulness the world had ever seen."

"Jim Hill thought so," interjected Granville, "but I don't."

This was by the way of being sensational, everyone thought. The banker went on to explain his point of view. He had been reading a magazine article which dealt with the revolt of the underman. That was the

real drawback to generalizations like Arnold's, Asa said. Never was there so much envy in the world as at present. The mob had just enough education to aspire to material comforts, and not enough to appreciate talent and ability in high places. Until the mob could be re-educated there was little ground for optimism like Arnold's.

Like Minturn, Gaylard had had little to say, but at this point he declared that he thought the mob could be managed a while longer. He was business-like, and confident.

There was more talk, about the inevitable liquor business, in particular the Canadian traffic, golf, the weather.

Agatha and Maggie, Mrs. Arnold and Mrs. Granville had not withdrawn. Mrs. Arnold, much younger than her husband, handsome and vivid, was the best amateur golfer in the city. She hated business and politics. She preferred to talk about Georges Carpentier and Papyrus. Not so Mrs. Granville. She thought we must do something about this awful revolt of the mob, and she believed organization was the only thing which would do it. Women had a responsibility to save the home and civilization.

Minturn kept his eyes on his wife. Agatha had never looked more beautiful. She had grown—not more matronly—more feminine since her marriage. Hers was a salient, shimmering, sophisticated beauty! Minturn loved his wife, and he desired her.

Thank God! she hadn't bobbed her hair. The heavy copper-colored braids were piled artfully upon her head and fell softly about her snowy neck. She made the angular, muscular beauty of Mrs. Arnold look lean and pale, Dan thought.

And as he fed his eyes upon her, she flashed him a smile of recognition, a smile that said, "I'm yours." He turned to where the moon glossed the waters; he was aware of the freshness and coolness of the night; the

city with its heat and sweat and roar had been blotted out by the moist, enfolding darkness. Like a sleepy child he allowed the company, the feast and Agatha to recede. He was filled with contentment—sense of security . . .

Suddenly he was awake. He was brought back by the piercing cry of a child. What was it? He saw that Agatha was smiling to reassure her guests. It was nothing.

"The cook's child, probably," Agatha explained. "We allowed her to bring her out for a week, you know."

The tide of talk flowed back. The maids brought in more ice and bottles; the furious battle of wit against boredom was renewed. Dan, however, was restless. He felt impelled to walk about. He knew that it would amuse him to ride upon the lake. He arose, said something to Agatha, and stepped out upon the lawn. Then he gave himself up to his impulse. He went down the path to the pier where Agatha's speed-boat lay. In a few minutes he was flying toward the open bay. When he had reached a point where there seemed to be only sky and water, he shut off the motor and drifted. Here he was alone.

"It is that confounded child," he told himself. He found that he was excited and depressed. He was thinking again of that sick baby; he was thinking of his mother in the small bed-room at home, ill and restless; he was thinking of the old men and women in the low houses in the hot, dirty streets; he was thinking of Rakov, bitter and cynical; of Hugh in the foundry on these tropical days facing the hot metal as it flowed from the furnace. He was becoming weak again, sentimental, unfitting himself for the role he had chosen to play. He allowed the past—what he had been—to clutch him back from the satisfying present. He knew a kind of cold, consuming despair. He laid his hot face against the boat's rail and groaned . . .

He was foolish. He was weak. He was unfit to be Agatha's husband, to stand for senator, to aspire to be governor.

He lay back and looked up at the sky. He measured his work, his life, by the millennial course of the stars. He thought of God, of the march of the ages. He remembered what he had been, a printer, a man with a cause, one possessed, driven by ideas.

Pshaw! He had drunk too much. He was becoming maudlin . . . The past would not down. It had its way with him. He had to turn and face the man-he-had-been with the-man-he-was.

He lay in a kind of coma, for minutes, for years, for hours—until he wondered if he could ever rise again. Then a glimmer of an idea showed itself. He came to face the grim law of necessity.

What joy the solution gave him. Necessity. It had been so! It must be so! It will be so! Always there had been human suffering like that baby's. Always there had been men like him, like Gaylard, like Granville, strong men, who built for themselves bastions against the flux and chaos of a whimsical world. There had to be. The world would go to pieces without them. For such as them there must be security. Sweet Necessity—older than time, older than God, the god of gods!

He became conscious of the glimmering shore-line. A train passed at the end of the lake, a romantic strip of tiny lights that printed itself against the blue void for a moment, and then was lost behind the woods. A motor chugged familiarly at a distant pier. He must go on, and on. He returned.

Agatha was waiting for him.

"Naughty boy," she said, "they're gone. I had to lie like a politician to shield you."

He was on the verge of retorting sharply. but instead he put his arm around her, and they walked under the dim trees. He would go on.

§

The campaign was bitter and vituperative. The eyes of the State, the newspapers said, were on the 113th. Could Minturn be returned? Imported speakers for the left and for the right filled the district and waged a skilled, determined battle against Minturn. Those whom Dan stamped as "extremists" seized the opportunity to expose what they termed the "pseudo progressivism of the millionaire stool-pigeon." Hecklers were present in all his meetings, not only to fire sharp questions at the speaker, but to shout "traitor," "pie-artist," "Gaylard's valet." Dan was forced to call upon all his mental powers to meet the opposition. Toward election he began to show the strain. He got grayer, grimmer, more pugnacious, lost some of his parliamentary tact, several times surrendered control of himself upon the platform and made himself a target for ridicule.

"Why, dear," he said to Agatha over and over, "they won't let me be as liberal as I am. Am I not the same man I was when I represented them?"

"No, thank God, you're not," Agatha replied. "You are bigger and finer. I am glad that you are rid of them forever, Dan. They are an undisciplined set, and you are too fine for them to appreciate you."

Thus the grim though hidden contest between them—grimmer because hidden—flared up momentarily. These two, like weary wrestlers were called upon to defend their class against each other.

Unluckily for Dan, Agatha's denunciation of his opponents did not satisfy him. It simply did not fit. It did not account for the stern rancour of the opposition, the flash of wild eyes, the gesticulating fists, the patent despair in the undertones and mutterings tossed up from that sea of faces below his rostrum. No, that crowd was something alien to him. He who used to receive surges of energy from contact with it now stepped off the plat-

form exhausted and haggard. Those experiences made him wonder if he ever had been a part of that crowd. Why? Why, he asked himself, is it like this? What is the difference?

§

Dan obdurately refused the aid of Matt Gaylard. He was prompted to this by his pride and his political sense. "This is my fight," he told Gaylard; "let me handle it my way."

There were compensations. State papers came to his rescue with editorials and special articles.

"As the campaign progresses, it becomes more apparent that the 113th senatorial battle is the opening skirmish in the gubernatorial fight two years hence," they declared. "In Daniel Minturn the public has an efficient and loyal representative."

Then came the disgraceful Lake Street affair. In retrospect, neither side was very proud of the incident, and Dan never could recur to it without a flush of shame. It brought Matt Gaylard into the campaign however.

Dan allowed it to be advertised that he would discuss the much-mooted power act at a climacteric meeting at a Lake Street auditorium. The crowd that gathered there was typical of those audiences which have begun to show themselves where parallel battle-lines between corporations and the people are most sharply drawn. It was apparent that there were workers from three camps in the audience ready to extract what comfort they could from Minturn's statements. It was early apparent also that there was bad blood between the factions and that each was ready to show its ugly side to the speaker. Before going on the platform Dan had telephoned to the police for additional patrolmen.

Everything might have gone peacefully if Minturn had launched into a discussion of the proposed power

act at the outset. Instead, he began to review his own record, stressing in particular relations with labor. He found that the crowd was listening. He had proceeded perhaps an hour when suddenly in the far corner of the hall he saw a man arise and mount a chair. He was interrupted.

"Will the speaker, will Representative Daniel Minturn, please tell us what he was doing in the hotel room when the anti-injunction bill was killed?"

"Hear, hear."

There was a very perceptible snicker traversing its devastating way across the huge audience.

"Yes, what?"

"Answer him."

"What were you doing?"

Instead of answering coolly, Minturn gave way to a momentary insanity. He considered the remark a studied insult to Agatha. He raised his hand for silence. When he answered, his voice was shaking with anger.

"If the questioner will step into the alley after this meeting, I'll take that matter up with him personally."

This was a signal for pandemonium. A bedlam of cat-calls, imprecations, and laughter broke loose. Minturn raised his arms against it vainly. It frothed up about him until he thought it would strangle him. Like a drowning man, he saw his hopes and plans sucked down into oblivion by the flood.

At length, hisses restored a semblance of order. The crowd was anxious to hear what the questioner would now reply. The questioner said, "Why not settle it now? I'm coming up." He insolently stepped down from the chair, and being lifted and handed about, he was passed toward the platform.

Presently as the figure approached, Minturn saw that his antagonist was his brother Hugh.

The fact made him indecisive. All fight went out of him. He wavered—paused. The crowd felt his loss of

command. It began to clash and grind beneath him.

For a moment it looked as if the meeting had reached a disastrous climax, when the police stepped in, turned Hugh Minturn, with his laughing, sneering face, back toward the entrance, demanded order, and with the subsequent ejection of Hugh and his associates, achieved it. . . .

It was an armed peace. What Minturn said after that did not matter. He soon closed his address—without touching the question of water power legislation—and left the platform. He went home crushed with the sense of impending defeat.

Next morning Matt Gaylard found him disconsolately preparing a statement for the newspapers.

"There are just two things you've got to do," Gaylard said. "Come out for public ownership of water power resources, and let us come into the 113th."

Dan consented.

Whether Dan had misread the signs of defeat in his constituency, or whether Gaylard's silent and invisible machine functioned perfectly he could not tell. At any rate, the returns, one week later, showed that Minturn had rolled up a decisive plurality over the other two candidates.

CHAPTER XIII

HOME

ON the day following the election, Dan was on his way to see his mother, when he met Rakov in the street. Rather he was halted in the midst of Second Avenue traffic by an unforgettable, colorful voice.

"You haven't got one of your monogrammed cigarettes about you, have you, Senator?"

"Why, Rakov, I'm glad to see you."

"How about the cigarette?"

Dan extended his case. The swarthy, delicate hand of his old friend extracted the tube, the brilliant probing eyes examined the faint gold lettering on the wrapper, the high-arched haughty nose sniffed at the tobacco, the flexible, cynical mouth displayed very white teeth—and with a sigh of relief, Rakov lit up and began to inhale.

"Well, you win, Minturn."

"Won, you mean."

"No, win."

Rakov liked to be enigmatic. Dan noticed that his friend seemed frailer than usual. Dan waited. Rakov turned his amused eyes upon his companion; a slow smile played about his lips.

"You remember our old chin battle, Minturn, don't you?" he explained. "You always contended that we should conceive human society as one big family, and I called that bosh. I favored, you know, the club idea—convivial fellowship—the swell club. Well, you win. Papa Gaylard, I hear, saved your hide down in the 113th."

Dan was discomfited.

Rakov continued, "In one week's time, they poured \$50,000 into that district. Now, I call that being rather fatherly."

Dan winced. He thought Rakov was going out of his way to be unkind.

"Well, you know how such things go," he continued.

"Sure, I do. Don't think that I'm trying to play the death's head at the feast, Minturn. Just thought I'd play the good sport and confess I'm wrong."

They seemed to have come to the end of their conversation after that. Dan spoke first.

"You're not looking well."

"I'm going away, Minturn."

"New York?"

"No, India, I think. Somewhere east of Suez. Been hoping I'd see you before I dug out." For a moment, he seemed to have lost the bantering tone he loved to effect. "You're looking well," he asserted, recovering the edge of his sarcasm. "I suppose the belly is part of your senatorial dignity, Minturn. But for God's sake, don't try to look like Gaylard. Don't for God's sake, be a cartoon."

Dan ignored the personal reference.

"Why India?"

"Why Minneapolis? Why any place? I've been everywhere, tried everything save India. I'm just bored, that's all. Getting old, I guess." Dan smiled. "Well, you plump plutocrat, I'm older than you think."

"About 60 I suppose. Why shouldn't you go? You have no ties, no family, to keep you here, and you can take your business with you."

The vivid face of Rakov sobered.

"But I have a family—a little girl three years old. We sort of lost track of each other, Minturn. Her mother died last week. Best woman I ever knew, Minturn. I picked her right out of the streets, a plain, stolid Scandinavian girl, ugly as a mud fence, but God,

how she could work, and love. No poetry about her, Minturn, but she was poetry. After we married she went straight as a die."

"Gee, I'm sorry about her death, Rakov."

"Oh, it's all in a lifetime, you know. I've lost other women—and there are more in India. But you ought to see the kid."

"I'd like to. By the way, wouldn't she be better off here?"

There was a flash of brilliant evil in the eyes of Abner Rakov. Again Dan experienced the irrational wish to see him in a tent on the desert, his black hair encased in a high, colorful turban, his tall, gaunt form in robes of a sheik.

"God no," he exclaimed. "I would not leave her here, Minturn, if I had to carry her on my back every step to the Orient. You Americans are nothing but pigs. It's a pig-trough civilization, Senator Minturn. It can't survive. Machines grinding out stuff that people don't want that people may be kept at the wheel in order to buy the stuff they don't want, and can't use. It makes me laugh, this industrialism, this imitation of the hog, feeding on sugar, and meat, and swill; these hog ideals, this hog art, these hog wars, where human beings are slaughtered in cold blood, with invisible machines, to grind out more stuff that no one wants or can use. It's sardonic—a farce for Satan, a mad, self-consuming dream."

§

Rakov trembled. The suppressed prophet was unloosed in him. He burned with a kind of madness of candor. . . . Minturn had nothing to say. In the silence, he saw Rakov return to himself slowly, like a pugilist recovering from a blow on the brain.

"Give me another of your damn good cigarettes," he said. "It's my health, I guess, that is taking me to India."

He looked fatigued—old.

They were not able to bridge the transition between their moods and lives. There was another abrupt silence, following which Rakov murmured, "Well, goodbye," to plunge into the traffic. Dan remained standing thoughtfully watching him. He was surprised to see him turn back. He came up, smiling his amused, almost wicked smile.

"I saw you with your wife the other day, Minturn. She's very beautiful, very beautiful. I was never one of those who blamed you for taking her—but. I never saw a woman—I've known women in every country of the world (this with pride and dignity)—with volcanic hair like that who didn't devour her mate. Don't become food for lovely Agatha without a battle. Fight, old man, fight." Laughing, he was gone.

Minturn did not care to go to his mother's after his encounter with Rakov. He went back to his office, smoked a cigarette, pondered life, fate, necessity, and went home perplexed, and just a little sad.

That night, he and Agatha went to hear Julia Clausen. The regal diva, with her soaring magnificent voice, caroling the stormy minstrelsy of Wagner, charmed Dan. Her voice was inspiriting, a militant horn, that called to battle, and spoke of virile loves with strong-limbed, full-bosomed women.

The audience no less than the singing spoke to Dan's soul. Well-fed, elegantly groomed men, and richly gowned, lovely women; the sparkle of eyes, the murmured comments, the soft laughter, and high enthusiasm of those with whom he was surrounded, had their effect on his spirit. He reverted momentarily to Rakov. He understood him better now. His old friend, he concluded, was sick in mind, as well as in body. Perhaps just a little mad. That was the great mistake; to think and think as Rakov had done until one became bitter, and becoming bitter, grew morbid.

Senator Minturn looked out over the gay, brilliant throng, while the plangent beauty of Claussen's voice rang in his ears. He knew life as fruitful and good. He found Agatha's hand, and gave it a friendly little squeeze. He gloried in the miracle of her hair.

§

Dan found his mother in the kitchen vainly trying to build a fire in the old range. She was a little breathless, quite soiled, with a smudge of coal soot across her worn face. Dan took the coal scuttle from her hand, set it down, and placed her, resisting, in the one chair the kitchen afforded. Then snatching up the scuttle, he went for coal; returning to tend the fire. Her dim eyes followed him appreciatively and deplorably.

"Now Danny," she implored, "don't do any more. You'll ruin your clothes."

"Nonsense, a little dust won't hurt them."

She surveyed him approvingly—from the gray spats and neat oxfords to the Fedora hat which he had not removed. He was imposing, perfect, she thought.

"Mother," he demanded, when the fire had been made to burn, "when are you going to let me get you that maid. It's time you stayed out of the kitchen."

"No, Danny. I couldn't bear to have a girl musing round. Anyway, if she came, what would I do? I have to work. . . . It's all that keeps me going, I guess."

She tried to smile, but nothing she could do could hide the truth from herself or from Dan. Life for her was a daily ordeal, an adversary that must be met each morning and vanquished. Work helped to obliterate the struggle. It could not mitigate it. As son and mother looked into each other's eyes—oh, so tender of each other—they conjured up a third presence, a spectre that stood between them. They seemed like lovers beckoning to each other across an abyss of doom. They were

separated by vast spaces. They were prisoners manacled together, and forbidden to speak. . . . As Dan looked into her worn face, with its brave smile, he could not see her for remembering what she had missed, and as she faced this well-groomed stranger, once her baby, she could not see him for remembering what she had lost. And though they turned back to each other repeatedly in the hope of finding an old, sweet relationship, each found that he had only wounded the other. But neither could speak of his pain. Each must feign joy.

Try as he would, Dan could not take pleasure in his mother's company. She reminded him too insistently of the difference in their lives. There had been a time, when he would have excused himself on the ground that he was doing something for her—for her and for all the other disinherited mothers. Now—though he only half-acknowledged it—this amelioration of his pain was gone. He saw—without her knowing it—that her affections were wrapping themselves around Hugh.

So they faced each other, dumbly, tenderly futilely.

Oh, he thought, must I become an antagonist of my mother too!

Mother Minturn fixed her dim eyes, wet with tears, upon his face until he was urged to cry, "Don't look at me that way, mamma, I did not do this to you.

"You know what you ought to be doing," he demanded. "You ought to be sitting in the front room all dressed up in that silk dress I bought you. Naughty mother, I bet you have never had it on."

"Yes, I have, Danny, honest," she asserted, a little embarrassed. "You don't know how I love to see it hanging there, so bright and stiff. It's like a dream. I often go up and touch it, just to see if it's real."

They were mocking joy—but it helped.

"How's Agatha?" she asked abruptly.

He told her his wife was well. They scarcely ever

got beyond this formality. Long ago Dan had ceased trying to tell his mother about his world. He could not say, "Mother, we heard Claussen last night with Dr. Joyce and Maggie Tollefer. Mother, we were at dinner with the Granvilles. Mother, we played golf yesterday with the Arnold's." Such things—if he spoke them—would not reach her understanding. Gradually he had come to know that to speak to them erected further barriers between them. God knows there were barriers enough!

Today they found a fleeting comradeship in speaking of his childhood.

"Do you remember," she asked, "the little hunting suit I made you to go with your toy gun, and how you used to hunt for 'ducts' in the back yard?"

"I'll say I do, mamma," he answered buoyantly. Some suit, some gun. How good you were to me, mamma."

"And do you remember the day you and Hugh organized the Minturn Military Band, how you got all the old dishpans in the neighborhood, and all the broken combs, and made so much noise that the policeman came in and told you he'd lock you up?"

"Grouchy old fool!"

"You were always speechmaking, Dan. You used to climb up on the kitchen table, when I was baking, and orate about capital and labor, and injustice to the working man. I was always proud of you. We always knew that you were going to be a great man sometime. With Hugh it was different. He liked to work with his hands, and he hated books and school. Children are so different that way."

"And don't you remember, mother," he put in, "how I used to go skating after school and stay till dark, and come home half starved? You would give us wieners and fried potatoes and white bread with corn syrup, and we would eat and eat. How good things tasted!"

"And then you and Hugh would fight to see who would get to lie behind the stove, so tired and stuffed with food you two boys were."

"Great days, eh, mother, days of real sport!"

"And don't you remember the long strike of 1893, and your first newspaper route?"

"I'll say I do."

"Your two dollars a week were a great help, Danny. And we lost the strike, and again in 1896, and in 1905. And you boys always helped. I don't know what we'd done without you boys."

So they talked, wresting a vicarious happiness out of the illusory memories of past days. But, as usual, they talked themselves back into reality and into pain. . . .

Dan glanced at his watch. He had been with his mother an hour. He had been generous today. He had to return. He mumbled his excuses, kissed her on the cheek, and went out.

To his surprise, he heard his mother tapping on the window, and turning, he saw her beckoning him to come back.

"I've been wanting to tell you, Danny, all afternoon, but I hated to——" she said, when he had returned to the living-room.

"Well, go on, mother."

"Alice and Hugh were married last night."

"Married?"

He was amazed, but beneath his amazement flowed an uncertain sense of pain, jealousy, loneliness. Why, they hadn't even told him. Why, they had shut him out completely from the family circle!

He turned to his mother. She was crying softly.

He forgot himself. He saw something of what the marriage meant to her. He knelt beside her. He put his arms around her, and pressed his face against her shoulder.

"There, there, mother."

"I wish I never had you children sometimes. . . . You're all gone now—all."

§

Dan resolved to do something unusual for his mother. He talked his plan over with Agatha first. He proposed to take his mother on a trip to California. They were to go by the Southern route, spend a fortnight at Los Angeles, and return home by Christmas. After Dan had showed his wife that he could study legislative bills en route, and could also survey the water power situation on the Colorado River, she was enthusiastic.

The project meant much pleasant preparation for Dan. He had to call at the Bloomquist delicatessen store and hold friendly council with Oscar and Lil, while Oscar, his nose just as red, and his eyes just as eager, tied up packages of groceries. He called at the home of Robley Minturn, now a national officer of B. P. O. E. and held high conference with Maude Ramsey Minturn, who was just as pretty and plump as ever. Even Ralph, Maude's idol, had his share in the conferences. Dan had learned to be quite fond of Ralph. All of Maude's and Bob's dire prophecies as to Ralph's disastrous and precipitate marriage had proved untrue. His bride, the dowdy, stout Adelaide Grubb, proved to be an energetic and daring business woman. The firm of Ramsey & Grubb, advertising counsellors, was handling accounts with the leading Twin City business houses; and they had a baby, too—Pellett Grubb Ramsey—who was a sturdy replica of his mother. Before Dan had finished his rounds he had been in the home of his sister Nell, now Mrs. Al Erickson, who had been married but a year.

Of course, Hugh and Alice were not consulted, but when Mother Minturn offered objections to the scheme on the ground that she could not leave "father", Alice let it be known that she would take old Tom into her home.

Trunks had to be purchased. A new wardrobe had to be bought for Dan's mother—a process Agatha took part in. All in all, there had not been such pleasant stir in the various Minturn households for years. It was almost like a family reunion. Dan's plan received universal approbation. Even Hugh said, "It's the whitest thing he's ever done."

On the day of departure, the children all gathered at the old home—with the exception of Hugh. There were jokes and sly bits of advice.

"Now don't take any wooden nickels, mother," Robley said. "And be sure to get on the Pullman the night they change the sheets." There was laughter.

Dan, looking very important and responsible went about strapping suit cases, while Mother Minturn fussed with her new hat.

Agatha, who was to drive the travelers to the station, drove up in her new car promptly at the hour appointed. Robley picked up the baggage and started for the door. Dan turned to take Mrs. Minturn's arm, but was surprised to find her face drawn and wan. Her mouth was clenched in a set line.

"I'm not going, Dan," she asserted. "It's no use, I just can't."

Dismay among all the children. Pleadings, gentle ridicule, mild invective, all were of no avail.

"It's no use," she said over and over. "I can't go. It's so far. I'd rather stay home. What does an old woman like me want to be wandering about the country for?"

Dan was at first inclined to be angry. It seemed to be a signal act of ingratitude on his mother's part to refuse so fine a gift. It was incredible. But her wan face, her trembling hands, the positively tearful look in her eyes, as, in her imagination, she surveyed the endless miles of travel before he persuaded him not to upbraid her.

"Well, mother," he said. "If you don't want to go, you don't have to go. But I wish you had told me a week ago. You don't know what you are missing, I know that much."

She gave a little, startled shake of her head.

"Well, if I done without California all these years, I can do without it now. Won't you all stay for supper?"

CHAPTER XIV

ONE NIGHT IN DECEMBER

WINTER came. A sudden freeze, and after that the mercury went flying down to sub-zero depths. Northern gales drove hoar frost through the glinting air. The milkman stamped and beat his arms as he made his rounds of mornings. Lakes and lagoons were locked in ice-bound isolation. One night, one heard the wind wail over house-tops. The temperature arose, and by morning the miracle of the snow had erased all vestige of the tattered year. It spread its beauty over dirt and autumn desolation. To Agatha, it seemed, a stage had been set for the coming of Christmas. She hurried about the house opening drawers and boxes. She hummed an old tune—a Weihnachtslied, learned at college—as she gave orders for the purchase of holly, and all the glinting array of baubles, the viands and confections that make up the Yule season.

She found that she did not regret being in the old Gaylard house for another year. Its shaggy spaciousness—it was such an old bear of a house, she said—lent itself to the gaudy pageantry of the Yule. It would bear all the red and gold and silver Agatha could lavish upon it. And as she directed her maids and extra help, old memories trooped from dark corners to make more merry the romantic mood, and to illuminate again the old rooms.

Now Agatha directed all her energies to the open house festivities for which the Gaylard's were famous. For a week before Christmas Eve Matt Gaylard was at home to his host of political friends and members of

their families. None was neglected. The ward leaders of the cities; the district leaders from the various congressional districts; congressmen and members of the Legislature; supreme court judges, bankers and senators sat at table with the "farm boy of Minnesota."

Dan saw Matt Gaylard in his element. His shrivelled, sagacious face, surmounting the ill-proportioned body, took on a constant, benign smile that never lost its genuineness. His high shrill voice carried notes of hospitality everywhere, and no guest, however obscure, missed a welcoming pat on the shoulder, or some passing inquiry from his host. The great boss unlocked the secret of his influence. He liked folks. He loved to mix, and to play the *deus ex machina* to those in trouble. He recalled the christening of Mike's fifth child; he remembered the death of Peterson's mother-in-law; he did not forget to inquire about the expected third in Coswell's family. Gaylard might well have been paternalistic Squire Gaylard, and this home the old manor house, and Agatha, Lady Agatha.

There were bowls of punch everywhere about the rooms patiently being emptied and mysteriously being filled again. In the kitchen, caterers prepared mounds of food—geese and turkeys, hams, whole young pigs, cakes, plum puddings, pumpkin and mince pies, cranberry sauce, salads, fish entrées, oyster cocktails, soups, hot muffins, brown breads and all the other appurtenances of the Christmas feast.

Boxes of candy were piled high beneath the Christmas tree, later to be presented to each lady guest. The whole luxuriant lap of autumn, it seemed, had been spilled inside the Gaylard house. Matt Gaylard was blest of men. An all-pervasive providence had looked down, found that his work was good, and showered the fruits of the earth upon his hearth.

Agatha, radiant and lovely, moved among the guests a gracious hostess. Once during the evening she went

to the piano, played her own accompaniments, and sang old English and French carols.

§

Dan sometimes felt himself a supernumerary amidst all this stir and gayety. He had no special function to perform, save to come at the beck and call of Agatha. He stayed little at the office, contenting himself with morning appearances, and with bringing his work home, where he could ineptly pore over it in his study. He and Agatha yielded themselves to the spirit of the season. They found that much of the excitement and the joy of their honeymoon had returned to them. The display of things—the color, the tinsel, the animation—stimulated their senses until they were like habitual drunkards keyed up to mellow intoxication by contact with each other. Agatha often stopped her work to come and sit beside her husband. She talked vivaciously about “next year,” “our own house,” “color schemes,” “the housewarming.” They kissed, and laughed, and whispered forbidden pleasantries in each other’s ears. They romped. They sang. They found themselves entering a new sphere of their relationship—a sphere missed in the other years of first excitement and subsequent adjustment. They learned to play together.

Of nights, the charmed circle of mellow light that fell about the Gaylard house and made the tree shadows seem only patches of mystery upon the snow, seemed to shut the world without, and mirth within. By tacit agreement Dan and Agatha avoided all topics of conversation round which bitterness and conflict had raged. Neither made reference to his own parents or recalled other Christmas seasons spend under different surrounding. Politics was taboo. Even Gaylard and his guests took no open cognizance of those bonds of master and man which held them. To be sure, there were whis-

pered councils in corners, but "this is a social function, I'll have you know, and not a caucus," Gaylard declared.

When Agatha went to the piano and sang in her contralto "Silent Night, Holy Night," it seemed to Dan that his contentment had reached completion.

When he was away from Agatha he drifted into sensuous lassitude. Before the open fire, with briar pipe and book, he sank down within himself, down until he seemed only a sentient animal soaking up warmth and dreaming primordial stuff. He wanted nothing. He lacked nothing. He merely wished to be.

§

The climax of all this gayety was reached Christmas Eve, when the more personal friends of the Gaylard household arrived. The Arnolds came; the Granvilles; Dr. Joyce and Maggie Tollefer; and a score of other vivacious persons capable of filling the already melodious house with bursts of laughter. An orchestra was provided, a harp and strings, and horns, which, from an upstairs room, sprayed the company with soft cascades of song. The round table in the guest dining room, now amplified, glistened with silver and glass. Gaylard himself planned and executed the centerpiece; a suckling pig, bearing a golden apple in his distended jaws, roasted to a succulent brown. Noses of bottles sumptuously unfolded in silver foil protruded from pails of hammered silver. Flowers were everywhere—poinsettas and orchids.

Mrs. Arnold moved in her own particular aura, firm-fleshed and glowing with energy. She brought men's eyes back to her again and again. She seemed an anomaly in that company of soft, seductive women.

"Well, Ag," she said, when they were seated at table, "I played 9 holes today."

"No?"

"Yes, took skis, painted the balls red, and never had a finer round in my life. Now I'm hungry as a hunter."

The feast began.

Dan found himself between Mrs. Arnold and Maggie Tollefer. He was pleased with the arrangement. He found Mrs. Arnold engaging, as she smoked her Russian cigarettes and talked sports. And she liked him, too, understood his political status, without deprecation as Mrs. Granville did not.

His eyes often rested upon Agatha where she acted as hostess at the foot of the table.

So the dinner progressed. Course after course appeared and was taken away. Bottles popped. Tongues were unloosed. Some one started a song. It was sung with spirited decorum. The second desserts had arrived, when Dan's attention was arrested by an extraordinary rapping on the bay window just behind his chair. It ceased. He concluded that he had been mistaken. It was repeated. Persistently as though a tree bough had scraped the pane. But the night was clear, cold and still.

He wondered if some boy in the neighborhood was going to be futile enough to disturb this gathering. He turned round. A stick manipulated by an unseen hand was beating a tattoo on the glass. Now the guests had heard it. There was an awkward, expectant hush.

"See what it is, Dan, will you?" Agatha directed.

Dan turned, opened the window, and looked out. Below he saw a man's figure. . . . It was Hugh Minturn standing in the snow.

"Come down," Hugh called.

Dan closed the window, and without a word to the company, filled as he was by a sudden flood of presentiment and horror, he hastened to the door. Hugh, cold and disdainful, was waiting there.

"That god damn doughface yonder," he said, gestur-

ing toward the butler, "would not let me in. Mother is dying. You have got to hurry."

It was a wild walk. Dan did not wait to change his tail coat, but snatching up cap and ulster he fled into the stinging air. He followed Hugh, half-running, half-walking, his heart thumping against his side, his mind preternaturally clear.

"So it has come," a Voice within him said. "She's dying. I'll not give way. I'll not let them see me cry."

One, two, five, seven blocks. At last, the small house of his mother.

"She probably won't know me. Perhaps she is dead, I hope she is dead," the Voice said again.

They entered the living room lit dimly by the coal stove, alive for him with many pleasant memories. From another room, came the disturbing sound of suppressed sobbing, rhythmical, fluent, a woman's crying, anguished.

"Don't cry," the Voice again counselled. "Death is but natural, and she did not suffer."

Mother Minturn's small, stuffy bedroom was lit by two candles, which gave uncertain light. Dan glanced bed-ward. Mother Minturn was dead. The worn face with its heavy wrinkles about the mouth was set in rigid grandeur. The suffering that was there was but a graven history now. She was still. Dan did not want to touch her face.

"I suppose you are satisfied now," Hugh was saying distantly.

"Never forgive him for that," the Voice echoed.

Dan felt himself shaken from some depth within, as sobs heaved themselves out of his throat, and tears stung his nose and throat.

"Oh," he cried, and knelt down beside the bed, his arms thrown across the frail corpse.

The thing that was himself ached and ached. The eternal man-child was wailing for its dam.

§

Slowly the past impinged again upon the present. The vivid scent at the Gaylard's—the music, light, warmth, laughter—came back as part of his immediate experience. It made the gray objects of the room, and the occupant of the bed seem altogether strange.

Dan's hand, wandering over the coverlet, found a rent through which the thin cotton stuffing protruded. Even her bed clothes were worn.

But he could not cry again. That first positive physical pain—as if some part of his own body had been lopped off—had passed. This that was left was something else, poignant and abiding.

When he came out of the bed room, the girls were there to greet him, in whispers, broken by sobs, and with a new, unobtrusive tenderness.

The details of the funeral had to be talked over, and Dan had to be told how mother Minturn had died. Each had to relate her version dwelling with a kind of morbid emphasis upon each detail, while each new proof of her maternal love brought fresh outbursts of tears.

"Just think Dan, she was alone when she took sick—she had baked all day—I guess she was going out, for she had put on the new dress you gave her—I don't see how she ever did it, but she managed to get to the phone, and take down the receiver—that was about ten o'clock—how she must have suffered, knowing that she was going, and none of us with her—Oh, I'll never forgive myself—Well, luckily Dad came in, and found her, faint and suffering by the telephone—he called Hugh first and then the doctor—she never knew any of us—her mind was terribly wrought up—she seemed, part of the time, to think that she was going with you on that trip to California—and then she would talk about some baby—I was glad when it was over." By such fragments they told him.

§

At last, Dan got out of the house. At the door, he found the car waiting for him. The chauffeur told him that Mrs. Minturn had sent it. He was indifferent to the fact. But the car served to force him to a decision as to whether he should go back to the party. He couldn't go back.

"William," he said, "drive about a bit."

His was the death car. He had died, and, imprisoned in the black depths of the somber equipage, he was riding down the streets of his town—and then by inversion—down Pillsbury Avenue to the grave of lost youth and buried hopes.

All the Christmas eves of the past came back to haunt him. All the brilliant windows mocked him. The streets were cold, and gray and empty.

"Mamma is dead."

The thought of his mother—and she had only been a thought—had made a warm, encompassing world into which he could escape from strife and fear. The world was cold now, and empty. His mind was a cold place filled with ruthless passions.

There was much to remember and no order to his remembering.

The songs she had sung to him—the time he had struck her in the face with a whip—her patience—the night he and Hugh had fought—her conciliatory smile—her pathetic regard for finery—her pathetic dowdiness.

Emily Selkirk? Who were the Selkirks? If he had a child would it look like her? His mother's nose was too large. She was never pretty. She didn't know very much. But how good she was. How tender.

Who was his mother? Were the Selkirks of good blood? Is there a God? Is there a heaven? Does life on this earth go on, and on? Would he go on?

They passed an empty street car. They passed bare spaces of land without a light or tree.

He had never known his mother. He had only experienced her. He had come out of her body. He had sucked at her breasts. But he did not know her. Was there anything to know? . . . That was it. He regretted not that she had died but what she had missed. Married when a child, bearing numerous children, she had had nothing—nothing but rising of mornings, cooking of days, sleeping. Nothing. . . . It wasn't right to make a human body into a mere domestic machine. . . . Now there was Agatha—beautiful and clever Agatha.

They crossed a maze of railroad tracks. They entered a strip of wood. They skirted a frozen pool of water. He saw a waning moon in the sky.

He would go back now. It was fruitless to drive like this all night. . . . It was what she had missed. She had had nothing.

They returned. They found the shivering city streets again. They were going home.

Suddenly out of his consciousness, the Voice: "You murdered her. Long ago. You willed her death. You are free now, free."

CHAPTER XV

THE GREAT POWER AND DRAINAGE ACT

AT the Golden Valley Hotel, overlooking the capitol, and the still, smoky city, Senator Daniel Minturn held vigil one April night late in the legislative session.

He had not been home for a week—scarcely out of his clothes. The long grind of the legislative mill was approaching an end. The power and drainage act over which the bitter fight in the 113th had been precipitated had deadlocked the session for weeks. There had been no other serious issue. From the first rap of the speaker's gavel, until this moment, every skirmish, every bill, every move, every piece of strategy, every eventuality had turned upon the power and drainage act. Now the law makers were facing a showdown.

Upon the table of Minturn's twelfth story room were piled books, legislative pamphlets, bills, a half-filled cigar box, a decanter and three glasses. He selected a cigar, gnawed the end meditatively, forgot to light it, and strolled to the window. The great buildings shouldering up through the glow and mist of the April night bespoke power in every lineament and line. The crowd crawling inchoately up the canyon-like thoroughfares shrank into insignificance—a file of purposeless animals—beneath the scrutiny of the watcher. Across the intervening blocks, where the Pioneer Hotel reared its symmetrical bulk, Minturn sought to fix with his glance the suite of rooms where he knew Matt Gaylard and his force of lobbyists were at work—busy, determined, and a little haggard. He turned and saw the glowing dome of the capitol, a dream of beauty in the soft light.

What should he do? He dreaded tomorrow.

He fell to pondering chance, decision, and the emanation of destiny from those choices that individuals seem to make. Make? If anyone ever made choices. He smiled bitterly.

Tomorrow when he passed through that door out upon the street, into that capitol, it was to cast a vote for or against the power bill. He cursed the fate that made him a decisive factor in the impending decision. He saw the bill for what it was, a makeshift, but makeshift or not, like so many pieces of legislation, it had become a symbol, an effigy, round which all the battling elements of the state revolved. Tonight as he stood quietly at his hotel window, a farm boy on a pioneer farm in a northern country was holding vigil also over that bill. A mechanic in the shops of the great railroad which brought the farmer's grain to the mills, was explaining the bill to his family. And his own wife, Agatha, was no doubt lying awake now pondering the terms of that bill.

Senator Minturn strolled back to the table, picked up Senate file 11,987, scrutinized it. Every word was familiar, every word detestable to him.

He thought of other things; of Agatha, of his life with her, so self-filling; of the years behind; of his successful law practice; his growing political prominence; of the years to come; of his potential importance as a dominant political force. He had achieved. He was somebody. He must go on. . . . His mind ran back over the events of the present session.

§

It was Biddles, I. W. W. and cynic, who first brought Dan to a sharp realization of his changed status in the legislature. Meeting each other in the Senate corridor one morning, during the opening days of the session, Dan prepared to greet his old acquaintance warmly. To

his surprise, Biddles ignored the overture, and brushed by without a sign of recognition. It was an open slight, not without its effect upon Minturn.

An hour later he spoke to Goodnite about the incident—casually. He and Goodnite, ironically enough, were being paired in a number of transactions. By Senate leaders they were classed together as independents.

"Is Biddles back?" Dan asked.

"Yes, didn't you know that? I can't see how he fools those birds in the 137th all the time. True, he was out a term, but slid in this year by a slick margin. The same old ranter. Jesus! how do they get that way."

Dan found himself wishing to defend Biddles, but he remained silent. He and Goodnite had their attention attracted by the crowd that was jamming the rotunda, the broad steps, and the lobby to the Senate chamber—determined, business-like groups, that moved into the Senate galleries with an air of ownership.

"Whew!" Goodnite exclaimed, "if they come like this now, what will it be later? They've gone nuts in the country, I guess, and some of the fool women, who have nothing better to do, are trying to turn politics into a Sunday school."

"Well, why shouldn't they come?" Dan suggested. "I'm glad of it."

The fat face of Goodnite broke into a grin.

"Orators always like audiences," he declared. "I was thinking of transacting our business. How can legislators get anything done"—he was winking knowingly—"if they are pulled this way and that by persons who don't know anything about what's good for them anyway? It's all right to talk about the dear people before election, but afterwards we ought to say 'get the hell out of here, and let us do some work'."

"But it's natural to want to see the wheels go round."

"And it's human nature to like to heave hardware into the machinery," Goodnite asserted. "All these

birds think now that they are going to bring the millennium if they can get a law on the statute books enabling the state to own water-power sites, and build power plants and drain swamps. It's absurd. Now, hain't it, Minturn?"

"What you trying to do, Goodnite," Dan replied good naturedly, "pledge me up before the bill's brought in? You ought to know me better than that."

Goodnite looked sheepish. They strolled on.

§

It was as Goodnite had predicted. This session of the legislature proved to be the most stubbornly and fiercely controversial in the history of the generation. The capitol was divided into armed camps. As the battle progressed members of the factions grew so bitter that they refused to speak to each other off the floor. Fist fights occasionally impended. Crowds thronged galleries and committee rooms. There was much oratory of the good, old-fashioned American type, much shouting about rights and interests, while the real business of the sessions was generally transacted over the coffee cups at the Niobe or in Gaylard's room at the Pioneer Hotel.

Gaylard had arrived on the first day of the session with a full office force, and was at work night and day. Dan saw very little of him—save when they met at home. There was a tacit truce between them; each refused to entangle the other in political discussion, but it was natural that they understood each other better than they pretended. What had happened in the 113th district during that final, crucial week had been as good as several hours of confidential conversations as a promoter of understandings. As senator, Dan found himself playing quite a different role from that of minority leader in the house. He was independent now. He "could look any man in the eye and tell him to go to

hell." How he hated those words. How galling to be associated with Goodnite as one of the few members of the center bloc. Neither were invited to caucus with the right and left wings of the senate organization. But Minturn had been given important committee chairmanships and was listened to with attention whenever he chose to speak.

From the beginning it was apparent that the huge majority once held by the old-line leaders had been wiped out, and that the new minority was threatening to seize the reins of power at every sitting.

The country districts, restless and potent, had sent in a new type of legislator, the dirt farmer, innocent of legislative methods, but highly conversant with economics, and animated by a disdainful hostility toward the established order.

One day during the earlier weeks of the eventful session—a session that was fast taking on the air of drama—Dan had pointed out to him a tall, lithe, young man, with a hawk-like face, standing at a corridor door surveying the senate.

"That's Townley," he was told.

"So that's he?"

"Looks his part, doesn't he? He's made all the trouble for Gaylard this year by sending the farmers up here. It's funny that the farmers would go bolshevik."

"Looks harmless enough," Minturn insisted.

"He's the most dangerous force in Minnesota."

Though Dan did not see Townley again, the Great Organizer cast his shadow across the whole session.

§

Without rapping, Goodnite strolled into Dan's room. Dan was startled, so deep had he been buried in thoughts of Townley, and so harrassed was he by dark surmises.

"It's getting so I can't get a drink in anybody's room

but yours, Minturn," the big man explained jovially, as he poured out a glass of gin from the decanter.

Dan wanted to reply sharply. He resented the intrusion. But he refrained. He was tired, and the shallow, exuberant spirit of the caller, like his huge bulk, was somehow irresistible. He noted the swelling purple veins on Goodnite's rolling neck, as he threw back his head and drained the glass clean—and he relapsed into a sulky silence. Goodnite had another drink, smacked his lips and sat down in the Morris chair. Taking out his pipe, he made comfortable sounds with his mouth and comfortable movements with his legs and arms. Dan refused a gesture of hospitality.

"I just ran into your uncle a while ago," Goodnite said dryly, indifferently.

"You mean Senator Gaylard," Minturn replied.

"I never saw the old boy so flustered," Goodnite went on, undisturbed, between puffs. "Some session, eh, Minturn?"

Dan nodded. Goodnite ignored his listener's indifference. He shuffled his bulk, comfortably in the chair, and reached for the decanter.

"You know what's got his goat? It's Hurst."

"Hurst?" Dan was enlivened.

Goodnite snickered.

"Politics do make queer bed-fellows," the big man commented sapiently. "Hurst's absolutely right on everything else, absolutely, but it looks like he's going to vote for this damn power bill . . . And nothing that your uncle can do can budge him."

"That's his right," Dan asserted.

"Oh, I suppose it is, I suppose it is, but he ought to have told his constituency down in the 120th when he was campaigning last fall that Miss Knibbs had converted him to socialism."

Goodnite paused. Dan saw in the twist of his narrow eyes a revelation of the stalwart cunning of the man.

"You mean his wife is for the bill?"

"Sure. She's for the bill, been so all along. Gaylard knew it, but he never thought Hurst would be fool enough to fall for her tongue."

"Well, who's going to lead the fight on it, if Hurst is on the other side?"

"I am," Goodnite affirmed earnestly.

"But I thought that you were for it?"

Goodnite smiled slowly—slyly.

"Now that depends," he said. "If there were a safe margin against it, I ought to be for it. The bill has its good points." He suddenly brought his great fist down on the table. "But, by God! it shan't pass, Minturn. It would be fatal to this state. It would send it into bankruptcy in two years. It's the duty of every decent man to smash it . . . Look here."

He took a Senate roster from his pocket. His pudgy finger ran down the line of names.

"That's how close it is," he said, with flushed face. "Hurst leaves us with a bare margin of one."

"You mean that you're counting me in against the bill?"

"Why, sure, Minturn! My God! You can't be going to ditch us at this hour?"

"Us?"

"Sure, your friends, your family, your business associates, the folks that have been playing square with you all along."

Dan smiled. "I'm independent, you know. I can look anyone in the eye and tell him to go to hell," he quoted bitterly.

Goodnite scowled; then chuckled. There was a pained look in his face.

"God damn it, you needn't throw that up to me. I never tried to fool you, did I?" he exclaimed self-righteously.

Minturn did not reply. To him the air was leaden.

His collar hung about his throat heavily. The face of his companion was offensive in its mask of avarice and power, and he himself seemed inept and weak, painfully unable to meet the situation. His placid and pleasure-loving nature, suddenly confronted with stark facts, only hitherto dimly guessed, never consciously faced, shrank away from action like a child's.

He trembled. When he spoke, it was without conviction.

"You know, Goodnite, I never make pledges on bills." He faltered. His remark sounded hollow and inept. For a moment, he was aware of the unreality of the situation. He fancied that he had suffered a metamorphosis from Minturn into Goodnite. He was like his companion—a gross, fat braggart, mouthing platitudes innocent of meaning.

He wondered why he didn't rise up, and turn this intruder out of doors. Instead he felt drawn toward his antagonist. He pitied him.

So they faced each other across the room glowering.

At length, Goodnite, mistaking Minturn's words and silence for opposition, began to whimper.

"I've always liked you, Minturn," he whined. "You've a great future before you. You can have anything that you want, if you'll play with your friends. You're not an ingrate, Minturn. You're not the kind of a fellow who likes to grind folks down under his heel? . . . I have a daughter, Minturn, just entering college. You wouldn't want to break me, would you, and send her clerking to Woolworth's? You wouldn't want to ruin your uncle, would you, Dan? It means too much to us."

A big tear dislodged itself from the rolling eye of the fat man and travelled ludicrously down his cheek.

That tear Dan now saw as the visible symbol of his ignominy. He had to stand and see Goodnite weep. It was disgusting.

He said coldly: "Senator, if you don't mind, I'll go to bed."

Goodnite went heavily, dejectedly, not without one more entreaty.

"Well, what do you say, old man?"

"I never make pledges, you know, and I make no exception to the rule." Dan's reply sounded lame, and futile.

§

A man keeps vigil. A strong man keeps vigil, walking back and forth in an empty room. The noises of the street fly up to him, but have no meaning for him. The stars glow and dim. The dawn comes. The dawn comes futilely. The day arrives with clatter and swelling cries of business. The day arrives grayly for him. Futilely and grayly the man tries to remember. Back into the corridors of his mind, he reaches for an anchor, for the man that he was, for a thought, a steadying thought of his mother, for some modifying idea to steer by—back, he reaches vainly. He pauses to stare wonderingly at the wonder of the dawn. . . .

The man throws off his clothes, and plunges beneath the shower. He returns to his littered room, refreshed and unsatisfied.

When Senator Minturn appeared in his seat in the Senate Chamber next morning, no one suspected that he had not been in bed. He came in smiling, nonchalant, clean-shaven, a red carnation in his button hole.

Throngs had preceded him. Galleries were packed, and by a special dispensation of the sergeant-at-arms visitors were admitted to the Senate floor. There was no doubt as to the magnitude of the approaching events.

The usual formalities. The prayer—the drone of the clerk's voice—preliminary skirmishes—the restless, expectant rustling of the crowd—then suddenly the thing

was out in the open, with the breathless, impelling hush that precedes a horse race or a cavalry charge.

Goodnite was on his feet heavily denouncing Senate File 11,987. The big man was tremendously effective when aroused. There was a slumbering fire in his huge hulk somewhere—a capacity for indignation—which when awakened clothed his prejudices in eloquence. He had, moreover, a caustic rugged wit, which stood him in good stead, and now he was jabbing and stabbing at that invisible bogey, which he early raised in his speech—dangerous radicalism. He soon had the galleries laughing at his rough jokes. But as he passed from point to point, and the slow-witted crowd sensed the drift of his remarks, one detected an impatient rustle of hostility. . . . Finally, the applause, which started at first in recognition of a joke, mysteriously continued. It swelled into pandemonium—in direct defiance of Senator Goodnite's upraised hand.

There Goodnite stood, like an inanimate traffic policeman, warning heedless motorists.

They were beating him down. The crowd had taken things in their own hands—spontaneously, lawlessly—and were denying him the floor. Goodnite saw what had happened. The blood rushed to his face, then away again, leaving him ashen and haggard. The speaker hammered vainly for order. . . . Not until Goodnite sank heavily into his seat did the hubbub cease, dwindling into a silence, armed and threatening.

"Should such discourtesy be shown another speaker, I shall have to ask the sergeant-at-arms to clear the galleries," the Speaker declared. "Now, the Senator from Hennepin."

Without rising from his seat, Goodnite said fervently, "I concluded, Mr. Speaker."

Derisive laughter followed this remark, but there was no further disorder.

Now the friends of the Power and Drainage Act had

the floor. A young man—a Senator McMurray—new to the Legislature had evidently been selected to lead the attack. He was boyish, fair, with a frank, appealing manner, and a militant but conciliatory tone. As he proceeded it was evident that he had that greatest of all political gifts, the power to catch the imagination of the crowd. He was saying over for them what each was saying in his heart. He was transfixing in words the pictures of comfort and ease that were floating uncrystallized before their eyes.

Dan watched him coldly, narrowly, at first, then he felt himself, too, being swept under the power of his artless simplicity and sincerity. Pangs of regret, bitterness and envy shook Dan. He was aware of maturation within himself of an intense and justifiable opposition to the bill. For the first time, he knew how he was going to vote, and for some reason he was filled with a sense of righteousness because of his decision.

"I confess to very little patience," McMurray declared, leaning forward, his hand clenched and animate, "with that class whose whole scheme of life is concerned solely with an aim to get, to get. Suffering, the colossal and withering catastrophes, the birth throes that descend on whole peoples and nations, or isolate the individual—all these are as far removed from them as earthquakes and tidal waves. They sit in their warm, luxurious houses blind to the sufferings of the poor, and to the tragedies in the house just round the corner."

When McMurray had finished, his boyish face flushed with the exhilaration of his task, there was deafening applause. When it had subsided, Goodnite was on his feet, trembling. He was like a man beside himself; his lower lip had fallen from his sharp teeth, and his great head was lowered as if he were going to make a physical attack upon a visible opponent. The vehemence of the man startled the crowd into silence.

"Mr. Speaker, I move you that Senate file 11,987 be

laid on the table," Goodnite demanded huskily. There was a second.

The roll was taken. Dan watched for Hurst. Hurst was absent. Hinman, Howell, Inmark, McMurray, Minturn . . .

"Mr. Speaker, I wish to explain my vote," Senator Minturn said, seizing the center of attention. "I am a proponent of public ownership. I campaigned on that issue during the campaign last fall, and gave pledges to my constituency in behalf of public ownership of natural resources. In casting my vote today, I should have you understand"—here he lifted his eyes frankly to the galleries—"that I am voting as a friend of public ownership. But I would not discharge my duty as a friend of this great principle or to the people of this state if I did not vote as I am resolved to do.

"It has been said here this afternoon that this is a class issue. I take issue with that statement. This is not a class question. It is a question of serving the whole people. And I am thinking of the people of the whole state. As this bill is drawn, Mr. Speaker, it will place the state in a situation where public ownership can but fail. I am convinced that this bill is a device of the enemies of public ownership to discredit it. Therefore I vote 'no.'"

As he finished, Dan felt something snap in the audience, and he braced himself for a deluge of abuse such as had fallen upon Goodnite. But he received nothing—save silence. There was a kind of deadly, despairing, tempestuous stillness in the hall. A few persons began filing out, like dissatisfied spectators at a theatre. Dan sat down. The hall was emptying. The Great Power and Drainage Act was killed. . . .

Someone was standing before him. He glanced up. It was McMurray. He was pale and dishevelled. He could not speak coolly:

"I just want to say, Minturn, that that was the mean-

est, lowest trick I ever saw in all my political experience."

"How's that?"

Minturn was on his feet, blind and groping. His long arm shot out and caught the younger man flush on the jaw. He went down in a heap. Others attracted by the commotion, rushed between them and lifted McMurray to his feet and led him away. . . . Minturn sat down again. No one spoke to him. He was alone. His eyes were fixed on an empty niche in the wall . . .

That night Dan opened the evening journal with misgiving. There it was!

SENATOR MINTURN FOULLY ATTACKED
ON SENATE FLOOR
Beats Off Assailant After Decisive Defeat of
Power and Drainage Act

CHAPTER XVI

LIKE THE BASE INDIAN

ALL through the long illness which followed, Dan was harassed by the notion that he would not get well. He lay abed in the guest room of the Gaylard house, where his eye could travel the wide, unfrequented street, while Agatha and the nurse fluttered in and out, bringing him books he did not want to read, food he did not care to eat, and flowers whose odor sickened him. They would come and stand before him and say, "Is there anything you want?" And he would answer, "No, no, nothing. Not a thing." They repeated their admonitions. "When one has had pneumonia one must eat to get back his strength." "I suppose so. But I'm not hungry. Later, I'll have something. After a while."

Occasionally an automobile passed by. He seemed to look upon it from an immense distance with a great and cold indifference. The street itself with its rows of pretentious houses interested him not at all. At first he thought his distaste for living was due to weakness. But as his strength came back and he began to sit up in a chair at the window and to make pretense at reading books and newspapers, he found that he had no desire to go out. The thought of the crowded downtown streets filled him with fear.

"I'm resting," he told Agatha when she came to cheer him. "Let me alone, dear. I'm tired. It's great sport just to lie back and do nothing."

Weeks passed. One summer night he was wakened by a passing machine that trailed snatches of song, laughter and young voices after it, as it flashed by. He could not

go back to sleep after that, and he lay musing. . . . Suddenly he wanted to get up, and go out into the night. The echo of the song he had just heard was still in his ears, and he remembered his youth. He arose, found his clothes, dressed and went quietly downstairs, let himself out into the garden, thence into the street. . . . He looked about him with a sense of joy . . . The night was soft, starry, and still. The air was fragrant with lilac, and the young foliage of the trees was frothy against the brilliant sky. He began to walk slowly toward his mother's house. His strength came back. He breathed in deep draughts of the cool air, and felt regenerated.

The little house was dark and still, with a look of unwonted emptiness. He paused and looked at it pityingly. He wondered if old Tom was living there alone. He must see his father tomorrow.

He went on down the street walking more rapidly now—with a purpose of which he was scarcely aware. He traversed block after block without weariness. At length he came to the broad sweep of the cemetery, where the trees made a canopy of black intertangled branches. With difficulty, he found his mother's grave. He had not been there since the funeral. Was that possible? He sat down on the warm, moist earth. A cricket began to chirp above his head. He felt happy. . .

The next day he went to his office for the first time.

§

Walter Hampden came to Minneapolis, and Dan and Agatha went to see *Othello*. Beginning with indifference, Dan suddenly felt the tragic story grip and hold him. He watched with dreadful fascination the sly ensnarements of Othello's soul, the poor Moor's struggles, and the dreadful consequences of human frailty. . . . The next morning he was haunted by Shakespearean de-

cadences; fragments of the action came back to haunt him; the deep-toned tragic music of Hampden's voice lingered in his ears. He was haunted with a sense of recognition of a reality he could not grasp. He felt meanings in the play he could not fathom.

The next evening he asked Agatha to go again to the theatre with him.

"I can't, Dan," she said, thinking of Desdemona, "it is too awful."

He went alone. Again the unfolding curtains upon the magic of another world—the inner world of titanic souls. He watched again, fascinated, seeking for the sign. At last, the words he sought came back to him upon the wings of Hampden's voice. They seemed to Dan the most tragic ever uttered.

Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know't;
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then, must you
speak

. . . of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; . . .

Those last lines rang like a tolling bell!

He kept his word and went to see his father. Tom was grayer, but no older. He got his meals at Hugh's and Alice's, but slept in his own cottage. Dan liked to go in and out of the old home, and planned usually to find Tom there after work in the evening. While Tom talked, Dan often sat in his mother's chair. Father and son got along well together, but Dan soon found that Tom did not need him. Dan noted that his father was paying strict attention to his appearance, and Robley

later told him that his father was calling on a widow. At first Dan was inclined to resent what seemed to him such early disloyalty to his mother, but when he saw old Tom's revived interest in life, he relented, and forgave him.

§

In his office one day, Dan's mind reverted to the afternoon long ago when Agatha had told him about her break with her father. He concluded that that episode intruded itself now, partially because of his own renewed interest in his father and partially because the Minturns were just completing their new home on the Manhattan Road. So excited and busy was Agatha with the details of moving that she could not "bother with a husband." He was lonely. He was curious. On another day the thought of old Morreson again intruded, and again he considered the possibility of calling. Finally one afternoon he gave up to the impulse, and walked over to the old house on Hawthorne Place.

Through the cob-webbed windows he saw stacks of books on dusty cases. He opened the door and went in, not without trepidation. A little baldheaded man with glasses pushed up high upon a wrinkled forehead came diffidently toward him.

"Something?" he said to the supposed customer.

"Mr. Morreson, I'm Dan Minturn," Dan announced, proffering his hand.

The little man looked confused.

"Your son-in-law," Dan explained.

"You came to see me. You came? I'm so glad."

He dusted off an old chair, and asked Dan to be seated. They looked at each other amicably. Their conversation lagged. They found that they hit it off best when they talked about books. Dan ventured to talk about his interest in *Othello*. Mr. Morreson said that he liked

Othello too, but that of all Shakespeare's plays, he liked *Lear* best. It was stupendous, mighty and true, so true.

Dan left, promising to come again. They were more at home with each other on the occasion of the next visit.

It came about that Dan came once a week to sit in old Morreson's shop. Coming there, talking with Agatha's father answered something within him—a hunger that had to be answered.

It was all very strange to be sitting in the gray bookish atmosphere of the Morreson bookshop listening to Hector Morreson expostulate on books. The experience was never real. Morreson was never real. It was like everything else these days—a dream.

They never talked of Agatha. If Dan made reference to her the little man avoided comment. But as Dan grew used to his ways—subtle, almost feminine—he came to understand that amidst all the comment about books, some of it rich and some of it so much chaff, there was a thread of bitter allusion to Agatha.

"I'm old-fashioned. You'll find that out, Mr. Minturn," Hector said on occasion. "I have been left behind in the procession." He laughed weakly, wagging his bald head over his plight. "But the joke's not on me. No sir, it's not on me. It's on them that trail after false gods, Mr. Minturn. They will come to a bad end.

"When one is in the book business as I am, Mr. Minturn, one can feel the pulse of the generation. Looky," he pointed to the dusty volumes piled to the ceiling—"all the ancient and modern classics going to waste. Not a person's been in today to buy. I often say, 'What do folks do with themselves nowadays. There's the movies—frivolous waste of time. If they'd only read good books.'" He went on with asperity. "And the women, they worship only material success. They want a man that's got money, that can load them with furs

and silks and diamonds. Why, I read in the paper the other day where a young fellow in a bank took \$50,000 and confessed. All because he wished to please his wife. Why, I've known daughters to forsake their own fathers for luxury."

There was no manifestation of pain or bitterness in the last words, only intellectual pride tinged with romantic sadness.

"I'll be vindicated, Mr. Minturn, as sure as you're alive. The day will come when I shall be proved right. . . . They will crumble like chaff. . . . Man can't live by bread alone."

Dan conceived the idea of bringing his father to see Hector Morreson. He purchased a box of cigars, got the two old men together, and watched them get acquainted, in the back end of the book shop. They were soon like old cronies, smoking and bewailing the departed past. It amused Dan.

§

Minturn decided to erect a marble shaft to the memory of his mother. He made elaborate plans, sending to Italy for the stone, and employing a well-known sculptor to cut it. He ordered it carved with a full-rigged ship setting sail on an unknown sea. He found deep satisfaction in watching each minute development in this project. He paid daily visits to the stone-cutter's shop. After the work was finished he had the lot at the cemetery landscaped. He liked to stand by the grave and think about his mother. It satisfied his sense of justice to have the narrow, straitened life of Emily Selkirk Minturn marked by a choice marble from the Italian hills.

After the monument was in place, however, and the last shrub upon the grave planted, he faced the prospect of finding a new interest. What? . . . One night he

dreamed again the old dream of crowds in strange, bizarre cities—crowds of which he was intimately a part. When he awoke he went downtown and purchased a bust of Mazzini. . . .

He became aware in time that he was running away from something—emptiness—the gray demon that had pursued him ever since he had been ill.

CHAPTER XVII

A ROAD TO UNDERSTANDING

"If you touch me again, I'll scream."

Agatha had slipped from the bed, and stood trembling in the middle of the floor, her pretty feet bathed in a flood of summer-moonlight. She was quite hysterical.

"I didn't mean anything, honey. Don't be foolish. Come back to bed," Dan plead.

"I'll be damned if I will."

Her voice shook with rage and bitterness. Each word struck Dan with amazement. Her unwonted emotion tore masks from his eyes and he suddenly saw how she hated him.

The struggle so long latent between them had at last broken into redundant life. These two who had submerged their personal likes and dislikes, their habits and customs, who had surrendered former attitudes and ingrown points of view—which had come with long association with others than each other—in short their group reactions—now found these class bonds taking hold again with the grip of steel. The honeymoon was over. A new period of adjustment was being announced. The cycle was complete. With passions fagged, they found themselves looking across an abyss of misunderstanding. They were no longer lovers, but Agatha Morreson, niece of Matt Gaylard, heiress of Gaylard's millions and Dan Minturn, a penniless printer.

"You're tired, dear," he told her, arising, and sitting on the side of the bed, his mind slowly adjusting itself to a fact that seemed incredible. She hated him. "You

have worked yourself sick getting the house in order. You'll see things differently tomorrow."

"Your way, I suppose. I wish I could be as good and as wise as you are." Her voice was filled with cold mockery. Every word seemed to surge from some unfamiliar depth of her. They wounded him. Try as he could to battle against it, he began to grow hurt and angry too. It was growing harder each moment to speak calmly.

"Suit yourself. If you want to be a baby, it's no concern of mine." He tried to hold his voice to a conciliatory, matter-of-fact tone, and he rolled over into bed, as if the argument were closed.

"Yes, so long as the male is satisfied, everything's all right," she answered.

"Now look here, Agatha," he told her. "I'm not going to quarrel with you. If you want to sleep alone, say so, and I'll go to the other room, but keep your sneers to yourself."

"Who started it?"

"You did."

"You lie."

"My God! what's the matter with you?"

She laughed.

"I'm crazy, I guess. I was crazy in the first place when I contracted to be your mistress."

"Mistress?"

"Yes, mistress. That's what I am."

"Who's fault is it?"

"You admit it then?"

"I've begged you to have children."

"Do you think children would change your attitude toward me?"

"My attitude? I don't know what you mean."

"I suppose you don't. You never do. But I know and it's got to stop. Do you hear? It's got to stop." Her voice was shrill.

"Yell a little louder so that they can hear you in Minneapolis," he replied coldly.

"Oh, you're horrid," she cried, struggling against tears.

"Honey!" He had sprung from the bed, and had thrown his arms protectingly about her. "Don't."

"If you don't let me go, I'll leave this house this minute, if I have to go as I am," she said fiercely, flinging his arms away from her.

He turned helplessly. Now what should he say—do? What was it all about, anyway?

"You—you gutter snipe," she added witheringly, following up her shrill attack.

There was no mistaking her intention now. She was trying to slay their love. There were no barriers between them. Their hearts and souls were bare, fiercely confronting each other, antagonists, ready to destroy.

"At least, I'm not ashamed of my father," he answered.

"Nor of anything else. You can't know shame. If you had any pride about you, you wouldn't have married me for my money."

"So that's it, is it?" he demanded. He was deadly cool now. "Throw that up to me?"

There was no retreat for either after that. All the vials of wrath were uncovered. The suppressed class prejudice and hates of years; the stored-up petty annoyances of a long relationship; the unrationalized resentments of an outwardly smooth friendship flared up to galvanize them into haters—killers.

"I might have known how it would turn out." There was a sob in her voice, and self-pity.

"Yes, it's turned out fine for me, I'll tell the world."

"You can say that, after all I have done for you?" she demanded. "I took you, made you, gave you wealth, station, fame, everything."

He laughed boisterously—cruelly.

"Why, you dirty slut, you did these things for me? Yes. And what have I done for you? I've sold myself, body and soul. I turned myself into a political renegade. Why, you dirty little devil, I killed my mother for you."

"Dan Minturn, if you don't take those words back, I'll—I'll kill you."

"Well, aren't you as sensual as a whore? All you care about is fine clothes, rich food, fine houses, fine this, fine that. You broke with your father; you kicked him out for these things. You don't want children. You won't have children. . . . All you wanted with me, I guess, was some one to sleep with."

"Stop, stop. Oh Dan, you are killing me." She flung herself down upon the floor, her head pillowed upon her arm, sobbing bitterly. "Oh-h." He saw the moonlight on her auburn hair.

Pity filled him. But he did not move. He looked with dismay at the ruins of their marriage. In this mood, he had no illusions as to what these words had meant. They were through. No love could survive that storm. . . .

Yet he loved her. God! How he loved her, loved her as she was, lying there in the cold light; loved her most when she was fighting him like a primitive woman, a feline thing. Yet he did not move. What should he do? He felt exhausted. He felt cleansed, exalted—all that poison was out of him at last

Slowly he got to his feet. He began to dress.

"I'll send Easterly over tomorrow to make arrangements—" he told her. He did not go on; it seemed unnecessary.

There was a moment of indecision, when each seemed to wait imploringly upon the other; then he turned away. . . .

He felt her arms clasping his knees. She said something he could not understand from beneath the heavy

mass of hair that cascaded down across her face and breast. He stooped and lifted her into his arms, held her, and soothed her like a child.

"I just can't let you go, Danny," she murmured.

"There, there."

"Take me away from here, please, far away from everything."

"Of course, I will dear. We'll go tomorrow, tonight."

He lifted her into bed, tucked her in, and left her like a tired child, her head pillowed on her outstretched arm.

§

They were waiting. In the days that followed they waited the moment of impregnation, when their minds, wounded by each other's words, would spring back to positive affection again. Their expectation seemed futile. The moment did not come. In the light of day, in the resumption of a grayer, drabber existence, their common life did not begin again. They were kinder, more tolerant of each other; there was more understanding and less love. Dan feared that there was no love at all. He knew that they were no longer man and wife. They were waiting only in the hope that the mysterious amative forces within them would somehow reach out, move toward each other, meet again and mingle. If they did not, what then?

They were fatigued. Their nerves were taut. They "got along" by an exaggerated show of politeness. They might have been two summer guests at the same hotel. They were no more to each other. Yet Dan found, and Agatha knew, that they both enjoyed their new-found freedom. They were single again. Dan's sense of obligation to Agatha, his morbid, ever-itching sense of inferiority, had somehow disappeared, burned away in the hot flood of words which he had flung over her. He was exultant, and he experienced a kind of primitive satis-

faction as if their rude clash had been physical, and he had struck her, and dominated over her. While Agatha felt freed of responsibility for him that had been irksome. She no longer had to feel that what he said and did was a reflection upon her. They accepted each other at face value.

One evening when Dan came home he found her in her room framed by festoons of many-colored silks. She apparently had bought bolt after bolt of the gorgeous stuff, and had draped it from the chandelier out of sheer aesthetic bravado.

"Isn't it just splendid?" she asked.

"It is beautiful," he answered with a smile.

He was smiling at himself—at the fellow he once was. Ten days, yes, a week ago, he would have been fearfully angry. There would have been a storm over her extravagance. That was not his affair now. It was hers, and he left her to prosecute her costly play alone—not without a faint consciousness of Alice Miller bending over the silk counter at Danton's.

There were days of enervating lassitude, when their spirits seemed dead.

"You know," she confessed one morning at breakfast, "I don't get the kick out of this house that I thought I would."

"Yes, I know," he answered. "We both need a vacation, I guess. But I can't get up enough energy to go down to the station to see about trains."

His break with Agatha had only accentuated his loneliness. They both missed the friendly atmosphere of Gaylard's house. Their friends had not yet formed the habit of dropping in at the "Pines" on Manhattan Road.

Dan continued his visits to Hector Morreson, and one day he went into the shop of Hornbloom & Glantz and shook hands with the boys. That night, obeying a vagrant fancy, he took the machine and drove to The Tambores, not without memories of Bricktop. There was

disillusionment. Tango Stair was gone. The present orchestra was not so good, he thought. Too much din. He looked at the girls differently, and they looked at him distantly. One roguish-eyed miss smiled impudently in his face and said:

"Hello, grandpap." The jest hurt. He swore he would avenge the insult. He had little trouble in making a conquest. She danced with him. He thought her very pretty—shapely—with a comely mouth. But when she smiled, he noted that her teeth were not immaculate, and the kisses she gave him in the car afterward did not taste good, and the scent she affected was very unpleasant.

That night when he came home he tiptoed to Agatha's room and stood for a moment with his hand upon the door-knob, thoughtfully. He did not go in. Agatha was very beautiful, he recalled. She was even more beautiful than when he had first known her.

§

They went to Colorado. They chose a mountain inn at the base of a formidable, towering peak. Their life here was simple. They lived in adjoining cottages, arose early, walked and rode a good deal. Every day brought fresh delights; a newly discovered mountain pool; a walk to the Cathedral Rocks; the ever-turbulent, ever-mirthful mountain stream; the endless pageantry of the weather, clouds churning over the colorful range; the sudden, passionate thunderstorms, the glacier in the chasm; the mountain side checked with spruce and aspen; the peaks cold and aloof like the bared teeth of nature; sunlit valleys suggestive of a fruitful, redundant earth.

There was dancing every night at the Lodge. They often walked over, in the midst of a nature that seemed obtrusive, towering haughtily above them. They de-

lighted in the rugged, strenuous trail under the scented evergreen. Agatha took his arm through the dark woods.

They did not irk each other because they made no claims upon each other. Now they were merely two guests at a summer hotel.

Agatha hit up a friendship with a young army officer, with whom she often danced. He was a likeable gentlemanly chap of no apparent depth. Dan fell in with a woman lawyer from the East, an intellectual, who gave him soviet literature to read. She was fascinating, dark and brooding, deeply-sexed and sensible of her charms.

Agatha and her officer often went out to walk under the trees between dances. Once they were gone a long time. Dan speculated. But he found himself indifferent. "If she wants him she can have him," he said. That night, before Agatha fell asleep, remembering how Dan had bent over the chair of his new-found acquaintance, Miss Wagner, Agatha confessed to herself: "Why should I care? If he wants her, let him take her."

After the dance they came home together—tranquil and friendly. Before their adjacent cottages, they halted. Perfunctorily they kissed and went in. Dan heard the key turn in the lock of her door.

§

They thrived under the whip of their new life. Their health came back in leaps and bounds. Agatha never looked more beautiful. She took to taking cold baths in the morning. Her eyes held fire. Her superfluous flesh dropped from her leaving her figure unimpaired. "I want to stay here forever," she said.

Dan responded, too. He wanted to climb every mountain in the valley, and did, gradually fitting himself, he said, to scale the peak.

The scaling day arrived. Dan left with Harrison, the young army officer. Before he departed at sun-up,

while the mountains were still flat, charcoal etchings against the rose-dipped sky, he came to say good-bye to Agatha. She was up, clad in her knickerbockers, ready to "take them a piece" up the horse-trail.

"You didn't tell me who is going with you?" she reminded him.

"Harrison."

She smiled demurely.

"Well, what's the joke?" he asked.

"I was just thinking it would be lonesome for me while you are gone."

She laughed merrily, but he thought he caught a note of wistfulness in her voice. It rankled. Did she care for Harrison? For the first time, he felt a fleeting pang of jealousy. . . .

Agatha was lonesome. The day passed monotonously. She spent the morning "straightening up" her room. She even penetrated to Dan's cottage, and put away his clothes. There were letters to write. She had lunch alone. After lunch she walked—alone—a walk which she and Dan had taken several times to the water-fall that came frothing over the moraine, bearing with it the cold breath of the perpetual snows at the summit.

She chose to sit before the fire-place at the Lodge in the afternoon. By just turning her head she could take in a view of the valley, and the wall of mountains beyond. In an adjoining room the children—the younger crowd—were at the piano playing snatches of songs and singing. Every now and then, there were bursts of laughter. They somehow suggested her days at college—the irresponsible days she called them. How utterly different life was from what she had thought it. Was it that way with everyone? Did everybody carry round in their heads gay, romantic pictures of reality only to have them smashed to bits by experience. She was getting old, almost twenty-seven. She was not happy. She had not been happy since that terrible quarrel with Dan.

His ugly words reverberated inside her painfully. She could never forgive him.

She got up and looked in upon the youngsters. A boy with a face like a baby satyr was at the piano. Two pretty girls with their arms about his shoulders were shouting out words about "mean mammas." She found herself suddenly disapproving. Young persons should not play with the sex appeal that way.

Miss Wagner came in. They talked. Miss Wagner was a feminist. She said that she had reached the conclusion that all modern problems—the problems of capital and labor, war and internationalism had simply resolved themselves into the problem of parasitism.

"It all comes down to the point of earning one's own living," she affirmed. "When I was younger, that is, younger than I am now," she added with an ironical smile, "I used to think that women were enslaved by a man-made world; that all you had to do was to point out to them their dependency, and they would free themselves. Now I see that women are natural-born slaves. They like to be kept. I know hardly ten women who like their jobs."

Miss Wagner acted as if she expected Agatha to agree with her, whereas Agatha didn't. She thought Miss Wagner horrid.

"Have you children, Mrs. Minturn?"

How impertinent. She wanted to tell Miss Wagner that there were probably so few feminists because so many of them made themselves disagreeable.

Miss Wagner talked a while longer, about "your fascinating husband, Mrs. Minturn." Then she withdrew to write "business letters." After she was gone, Agatha could not help overhearing what two men, who had just come in, were saying about scaling the peak. They were evidently planning a climb on the morrow, and were considering the necessity of taking a guide. One said that a guide was a nuisance because a guide took all

the zest out of the climb. The other was impressed with the danger of making the expedition without a guide. He recalled the score or more lives which the mountain had claimed.

"There was Miss Dermer," he stated, "a member of the Alpine Club, champion woman climber of Europe, who was the first recorded victim. She thought that she could go it alone, got caught in a squall just the other side of the timberline, and died before help could reach her." The speaker went on to enumerate other instances of lost climbers. "It's those sudden squalls," he declared.

It was the first time that Agatha had thought of scaling the Peak as dangerous. She was disturbed. She got up and went out on the verandah. The sun was beginning its descent. The swift mountain twilight would be upon them shortly. She stepped down and took the trail up the mountain. She would go and meet them. They would be returning soon. As she ascended, she paused now and then and looked back upon the winding trail, the inn with its cluster of cottages, smoking tranquilly in the sunshine, the road, the brook, the wall of mountains beyond, and to the right, in the gap between the ranges, the sunlit valley, an interminable plain, with suggestion of lakes and cities upon its surface.

When she had gone perhaps half a mile, she chose a stone and sat down, a few paces from the trail. She saw the sun go down. She glanced at her watch. It was 4:37.

"At six o'clock," she said, "if they have not come, I shall organize a searching party."

She faced quite boldly the thought of Dan's death.

Natures like Agatha's need the stress of excitement to make them think; then they do not think so much as brood with a kind of sifting logic. She sat there in the deepening twilight, her eyes on the hands of the watch, experiencing death and emptiness. She was conscious of the warm stone under her, its steadfastness. She felt the beat and throb of the waterfall through her body.

She was physically sensible of the Earth, its everlastingness and burly strength. She fell to dreaming about the origin of life, and its extinction; about the warmth of the throbbing body, and its dissolution into cold mud; the kiss; the thrust of life up through the sheath of clay; the passion of life to perpetuate itself.

Under her musing she found pleasure in fancying the Earth a giant female, the hills as her woman's breasts, from which all things, man, beast and plant sucked life.

Quite suddenly she acknowledged that if Dan were gone she wished she had a child, a life-copy of him himself. Her imagination played tenderly about Dan. He seemed more beautiful than he was. For the first time she consciously desired him.

She was surrounded with mystery and beauty. She was conscious of her own body, its contours and ardours, its slim strength and grace.

The thought of the child persisted, like a faint aroma blown from nowhere. How good it was, she told herself, to will a baby into the world. It was like creating it.

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Dan found her sitting on the steps of his cottage when he returned. He thought her cold and indifferent, but when he kissed her he suddenly found her lips clinging to his.

"Had rotten luck," he explained, "When we were half-way down I twisted my ankle, and that slowed us up. Harrison was a brick."

Harrison? She had forgotten Harrison.

"Climbing the Peak is one of those things," he added, "you like to have done—once. I never want to go back. You can't imagine anything more lonely and awful than the top of that mountain. It is like, well, like the tomb of a god."

"You can tell me all about that tomorrow," she asserted. "Now you must get your foot attended to."

She had kindled a fire in the stove and had the kettle singing. She insisted on removing his shoe and cutting the soiled sock from his swollen ankle. When she had immersed it in steaming water, she went foraging for food and soon returned with a tray of sandwiches and pie.

When he had eaten he remarked, "Do you know, every bone in my body aches. I thought I was in great shape, but believe me, you have to do some hauling and straining to lift your body up that last half mile." He yawned.

"I suppose that means I must get out," she smiled.

"I was just thinking, Agatha, how nice it was to have you here. This is the first time you've been in, you know. What did you do today?"

"I've been with Miss Wagner. She's awfully sweet, don't you think?"

"You want to know what I really think? I think she's an old fool."

She laughed merrily.

"Well, goodnight," she said, and without kissing him opened the screen door and stood for a moment on the steps. He heard her characteristic gasp of pleasure at the night; then she was gone. . . .

He was soon asleep.

When he was awake, several hours later, he thought for a moment that he had not been asleep, for she was standing where he had last seen her, in the doorway.

"Danny, are you awake?" she whispered.

"Yes."

"May I come in? It's so lonesome over there."

CHAPTER XVIII

BOSSSES

WHEN they got back to Minneapolis, Dan found that the tide of events had receded and left him high and dry. He thought of Hector Morreson and his remark, "I have fallen behind in the procession," and he understood it better now. Old Morreson had not fallen behind his generation actually, but had sustained a change within that made men and their tangled scheme seem strange. It was so with Dan. He felt older than he was, fatigued, and indifferent. But he had not come to that point where he could discuss the situation with himself, and face the outcome. "I guess everyone has just one good fight in him," he commented, "and I've made mine." He himself was a straggler in the great human army.

One day, soon after his return, Matt Gaylard came to the Tollefer Building on the second visit that he had ever made to Dan's office. The first, Dan recalled, was on the occasion of Dan's quarrel with Goodnite. Gaylard, his clothes flapping on his emaciated form, came in confidently and smiling.

"Why, Mr. Gaylard, are you ill?"

"Never felt better in my life," the great man informed him.

"Then you have been reducing, by music perhaps?"

"By the forcible method. Been through the fight of my life and lost. By the way, it affects you, Minturn."

Dan looked up quizzically. He resented Gaylard's implication. But he was tremendously interested. Gaylard had always intrigued him, long before he had ever

known him, and lately he had come to like the big boss very much. Gaylard's humanness was irresistible. He had a kind of feminine tact, too, that permitted him to let Dan alone. Save in the one campaign, Gaylard had respected his wishes and followed a policy of "hands off."

"I'm done, Minturn." There were unmistakable notes of bitterness in Gaylard's voice, though he smiled and tried to appear indifferent.

"How can you be done? You're not in office?"

Gaylard emitted a fatherly smile.

"Give me a cigarette, will you?"

Dan held a match while the old man puffed. Gaylard's face was pathetic with the heavy folds of skin lying loosely about his jaws and neck. One could not mistake the face's benevolence or obvious age.

"You make me laugh, Minturn. I sometimes wonder how you got as far as you did in politics. You always impress me as one who was born yesterday."

Dan was not disturbed by this criticism. It was in accord with his present mood not to care about it, or anything else.

"Mr. Gaylard, ever since I was kneehigh, I have heard your name spoken in awe by men. They have feared and envied you. You can't expect me to get over that attitude in five minutes—just by your coming in here and saying you're done."

Gaylard chuckled. He was pleased, as any old man is pleased by recollection of exploits far past.

"I made 'em hop, I guess, while I was on the job," he said.

"Did you ever know they called you Czar Gaylard?" Dan asked inquisitively.

"Oh, they called me worse than that, and I don't know but what I deserved it," he mused while a look first of dejection then of pride flitted across his face. "You see," he added, "it's Goodnite."

Dan understood that Gaylard expected him to be surprised at this revelation, but he was not.

"You worked with him?" Dan asked.

"Why sure."

Dan surveyed Agatha's uncle sharply and wondered just how much he knew of the ugly episode with Bricktop.

"God damn it all," Gaylard continued, "what makes me mad is that I made him, I took him out of a thirty dollar a week job, and taught him all he knows." Losing some of his vehemence, in the mellow light of retrospection, the big boss went on.

"Everybody knows that Hiram Goodnite has no brains. Everybody knows that he has the soul of a scab traveling salesman. That's what he was when I discovered him; think of that, that 250 pound baby selling ladies' silk lingerie for a living." Gaylard could not suppress a smile at the incongruity. "I met him one night in Fargo. We got caught in one of those blizzards that crumple up transportation, and had to lay up several days. I had been up to see Alex McKenzie. The farmers had been badly hit by drouth and hail that year and I wanted him to modify his campaign policy. Well, I met Goodnite in the lobby of the hotel, and got talking to him. I was surprised to find that he had a grasp on the political situation in both Dakotas and Minnesota. He traveled in all the little towns of the Northwest, kept his ears and eyes open, and formed his own opinions. But he had no ambition; he was lazy, bummed a lot, and I had no idea of offering him anything until after a little episode at the hotel."

Gaylard paused here, as a good story-teller will do when he is about to make a good point.

"Hiram is the cruellest and coarsest man I ever saw. We were having a little drink and a game of cards in a back room of the hotel the second night, and Goodnite got tight. He swore and used the vilest language I ever

heard. There was one woman in the place at the time, drinking with a man at the other end of the room. Goodnite got up and staggered over to her and seized her. Her companion arose to remonstrate, and Goodnite felled him with a back stroke of his great paw a good deal as an angry bear might brush away a hornet. Then the damn fool started to perform an obscene rite there before us. . . . It took three of us to whip him and get him to bed. I finally knocked him down with a poker. . . . That's how he got the scar over his left temple." Gaylard chuckled softly.

"After we got back to Minneapolis I offered him something. He organized his ward for us, and afterwards went to the city council."

The narrator paused reflectively.

"You know, Hiram Goodnite has got more than anybody else I know what every politician has got to have—the kayo punch. . . . There used to be a prize ring man round here that had everything—strength, speed, ring generalship, staying powers, a great defense, everything but the power to give the final kayo blow. He was the best defensive heavy in the business, stayed 15 rounds with Jack Dempsey. As long as he could fight a defensive fight he was a bird. But just let him get the other fellow on the run, and he turned yellow. He never had the heart to take his man. He would dawdle along, dawdle along, until the final gong. Well, the irony of the thing was that he was knocked out by a third-rater that he had already whipped. He had floored his man four times in the second round, and then began to ease up on him, only to rush into a stiff left in the sixth. . . . Goodnite never made that mistake. He is 100 percent ruthless. Politics to him is war. He tears into them and eats them up. And if you ask me, Minturn, I guess he's right."

"I had my round with him," Dan asserted.

"But I never thought that he'd turn on me," the old

man continued sadly. "If I'd said the word last fall, he could have been retired, but I thought 'no, what's the use? He's a good scout. I'll let him get by.' Now he's got me."

"He can't last," Dan asserted. "Surely that fellow can't last."

"Well, I don't know. He's cunning, and he's ruthless. Ever since the close of the legislature, he's been taking credit for the defeat of the power act. You know, I told him to let you alone about that fool bill, and he claims credit for having swung you over."

"He's a damn liar," Dan interpolated.

"Yes, of course he is," Gaylard declared. "But his story looks plausible. He's told Granville and the others that I'm getting old and losing my grip, and that you've changed me." He smiled. "After twenty years on the firing line, he thinks I could be budged. . . . You see, Granville's the kind that likes big results. The margin on the power bill was a little shaky, and he's afraid."

"Granville?"

"Yes—Asa. He and I have been going it together for twenty years. Asa's got more political gumption than all the other bankers put together."

"I'll see him," Dan offered eagerly. "I'll tell him the truth about Goodnite."

Again Gaylard smiled—a fatigued, amused smile.

"Oh no, you won't. It wouldn't do any good if you did. And if it would, I wouldn't let you do it. I'm done, and I'm glad I'm done." Unmistakable weariness on his face. "I made the mistake of getting sore at first and of fighting back. That was because of Goodnite. But now I'm glad. . . . You don't know what a relief it is to be out of that game. I haven't had a free hour in 25 years. Not one. They call me the Big Boss, but they don't know. I don't boss anything. I have had to watch my step, pleasing both sides, the voters and the others. It wasn't easy, and it wasn't pleasant. No honor.

No applause for Gaylard. Only obscurity and a lot of hard work and grief. You know I was only an appointee to the senate. . . . It's funny," he reflected. "I was a good deal like you when I started, idealistic and all that sort of thing. But I learned in two campaigns that it won't do. The people won't let you. The mob needs a man in a high hat to sit on the coach and drive them. After my little flirtation with reform I switched, and tried to make the best Driver I knew how. I gave them all I could, Minturn, under the circumstances."

He spoke with great dignity as one certain of himself and confident of the soundness of his philosophy.

"Now I'm going back to Chicago county and wear old clothes, and do just as I damn please." He paused and smiled. "I may get married."

He was at the door. "By the way," he said, "if Goodnite comes round about the governorship, I'd take him up if I were you."

"Did he send you?" Dan demanded.

"Hell, no. If he'd said a word, I'd handed him another poker. I really think you are the best man for the place, Daniel."

Dan was silent. Gaylard shook his hand, and drifted out, looking worn and stooped.

"The old war-horse faithful to the last," Dan mused. "Knocked out, but still eating out of the same old nose-bag."

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Gaylard's story made a deep impression on Dan. It increased his perplexity, and deepened his despondency. He began to see that he had become afraid of men, or to go deeper, of the crowd. He recalled the attack upon Goodnite on the Senate floor, and further back, the near riot at his own meeting during the last campaign, and he was afraid. When men undertook to work in such uncertain stuff as elemental human nature, they were

playing with high explosives. They were usually destroyed. Now Gaylard. The old landmark, he who had ridden a score of political storms was swept out—to become just a tiresome old raconteur, going the rounds from office to office telling how he once had done it. . .

As he considered these things, he remembered his brother Hugh. Hugh hated him. Why? They were blood brothers, yet they did not speak. They had played together, yet they were separated by high walls of antipathy. . . . He felt sad. Life seemed a vast welter of meaningless experience. . . . There was his own vote on the power bill. He could not forget it. He was adrift—a wastrel. Cut loose from his own class, he could not make permanent attachment with another. It was all very sad!

§

Dan got a note from Rakov dated at Singapore. "Dear Minturn (it ran): This is a great country, and I'm glad I came. The kid is well. Lots of color and romance. India is seething underneath; the king of the world legend is awake, and these Gandhified heathens may decide to conquer the western world by something more than non-violent non-cooperation. . . . No matter to me. I like their women, just like children, and I am tired of sophisticated wenches. . . . India has something you damn Occidentals (excuse me, save one Senator Daniel Minturn) never feel, a consciousness of the whole human family. It's quite different from the economic internationalism we hear preached so much in America. And the western world has something these folks never thought of, the scientific spirit. Heigho. The women are gracious—none of your damn airs. I live within the shadow of a temple which is said to be filled with beautiful women, but into which no man penetrates. See the possibilities for adventure. Au revoir. Rakov."

§

One night in late autumn when the crisp air and golden moonlight had enticed him outside for a brisk walk, Minturn happened upon a crowd passing in and out of an auditorium. He went in. He found that there was something pleasant in submerging himself in that nondescript mass of humanity. It enveloped him. It laved him round with little waves of force. He soon discovered that the crowd was working-class, laborers and farmers, in overalls, and toil-stained clothes, looking grim and uncomfortable as they waited for speakers.

Dan was on the point of going, when men appeared upon the platform. He stayed to hear announcements. Townley and McMurray were to speak.

Townley, the Great Organizer, came forward confidently, his hawk-like face grave and commanding. He was not in a hurry to begin, and stood looking into upturned faces, until stillness filled the room. Abruptly he shot out: "If there is a man among you who doesn't know himself to be a fool, he will before he leaves this hall tonight." There was laughter and hand-clapping. He told how he had begun going up and down the Northwest talking to farmers about organization, how everywhere he was met with opposition from the "money crowd"; how the opposition flowered into violence; how he himself had been a farmer, and was stubborn to give up rights; how the farmer "was broken on an ill-made economic system, and a government callous to the needs of the unorganized classes."

All that he said was underlaid with a deep and corrosive irony. Townley had a mordant wit that played over the complexities of politics and economics with singular simplicity. He never stooped to flattery, but he cut and stung his hearers with tormenting words. He was like nothing so much as a male fury lashing the pride and conscience of his audience with ironic blows.

As he continued, Dan's mind ran back to those gray days spent on the steamer Northland, when he and Agatha were launched on their wedding journey, and to that gray figure reading Nietzsche at the prow.

"Let us have not contentedness, but more power; not peace at any price, but warfare; not virtue but efficiency. The weak must perish. That is the first principle of our charity, and we must help them to do so."

Townley was thundering. "Don't be slaves. Sniggling, grumbling slaves. Be men. Help yourself. Organize."

The proletarian aristocrat!

McMurray was like a gentle shower of rain after thunderbolts. There was something youthful, enlightened, affectionate, and even radiant about him. You could no more escape the charm of him, Dan found, than you could escape Townley's percussive irony.

To McMurray, politics was but a collective way of doing business. To him, government was a great enterprise in cooperation, a fulfillment of the prophet's dream of good fellowship, or the pioneer's habit of neighborliness. Politics was sordid, now, he asserted, because it was debased by "unscrupulous and grafting bosses" and by "sly interests" who invaded it for selfish ends.

All that he uttered was soaked in a common humanity. He spoke of little children, old mothers, broad-backed fathers, and above all else of youth, youth seeking to fulfill itself, "egoistically perhaps but mysteriously and quietly too that the race might go on."

As he spoke some note in his voice, some imponderable tie bridging the distance from him to Dan, made Min-turn, his late opponent, pass in thought to his mother, and thinking of her, he forgot his jealousy of McMurray, his own blind and aggravating pain and bewilderment, and his ambition. When McMurray had finished, he found himself applauding vehemently with the rest.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHILD

ALL through pregnancy, Agatha led a normal, happy, excited existence. As she often said, she was a visible proof of the conventional fallacy that modern woman need take child-bearing hard.

"I'm a healthy beast," she told her husband one morning at breakfast, as she attacked a generous portion of toast and bacon.

"Your mouth is too big for your face, Agatha Morreson."

"How dare you say such things to your lawful wedded wife. Shame!"

"I'll bet you'll bequeath our heir a mouth like that," he told her.

"Just so he doesn't inherit the Minturn temperament I'll be satisfied," she retorted; "anything but that."

"And he'll have to be red-headed, poor youngster."

"Or bald."

They laughed. It was good to be alive. It was good to have a luxurious house. It was good to shut the world without and lock peace in. It was good to be in a family-way. Life was immense with possibilities that one could not talk seriously about it. One had to speak ironically—by opposites—or to resort to the one-syllable racy language of peasant folk, or leave the rest in silence.

"I could walk sixty miles today," she continued.

"If you had a steak as thick as my hand at the other end of the road. It's a good thing my law practice has picked up or you would eat me out of house and home."

"You begrudge every bite I eat," she pouted.

"Not quite. But I know I'm going to be jealous of him. I see it all now, you two will plot against me."

"I'll have someone to love me at least."

"I'll go into the garden and eat worms."

"Cheer up, Danny, he won't be born a full-grown man."

"Thank God."

Thus they confessed their desire for a boy.

"If wishing has anything to do with it she'll be a boy," Agatha asserted.

"I suppose. You always get your way."

Dan was as absorbed in the preparations as Agatha. He secretly welcomed the excitement, for it drew him away from the drab monotony and empty grayness of his own life.

As Agatha's time approached they went for long drives, taking food with them. They stopped beside budding fields, by swollen streams, in woods sweet with the homely smell of earth. They sat down on warm sod, near running water, and read, and ate, talked and sang. They watched farmers at work in the fallow land; the crows wheeling over the upturned furrows; the uprising of flowers. They felt like simple, honest, healthy folk. In the blur of this universal experience, Dan felt nearer to his own class—felt somehow that Agatha was a woman of his own kind.

"I feel like a tree, honey," Agatha explained, "with my feet in the good brown earth. Rich sap sings in my veins. . . . Aren't you glad we are having him?"

"You blessed one, you never were so beautiful."

"Silly old flatterer."

They kissed.

"We're just foolish old married lovers, aren't we?" she added.

"Hain't it so?"

For both of them the time passed quickly. . . . Years

afterwards they looked back upon it as a season in which they had contrived to touch reality together.

That man of the fields was of unending interest to Dan. The rhythmical, stalwart figure behind the plow, or the motionless, pensive form upon the harrow intrigued him. His gaze came back to him again and again. From Agatha to the toiler, and from the toiler to Agatha, his eye ran. There was something everlastingly restful in that stooped figure, those plodding horses, the unfolding furrows of dark earth. . . .

They played at love. "Our renaissance," they jestingly called it.

"It was never like this before," she said. "It's deeper, bigger. It is because he is coming, Dan."

His eyes rested upon her with satisfaction. She had lost all her asperity. She was a thing of lovely curves—a hospitable heart.

§

One June morning, when the warm earth seemed to be about to burst into bloom, Agatha awakened Dan.

"This is the day of the party. Hitch up Dobbin, sir, and drive me to the fair."

Gaily she packed her own things, tripped down the stairway to the waiting car. She smiled bravely as he asked, "Do you feel sick yet?"

At the hospital, Dan soon found that a well-known public man is no more or less than a private intruder. When he and his wife had been well established in a pleasant, airy room, he was soon ousted by a soft-voiced, very energetic, obdurate nurse. There was nothing for him to do but sit in the hall. And so he sat. No one paid the least attention to him. When, about noon, after hours of waiting, Agatha was taken to the delivery room, he ventured to follow. He found her crumpled up on the bed, her face distorted. Trying to smile, she

begged him not to stay. He retreated, inwardly glad that he did not have to witness her travail. He went back to the window seat at the end of the corridor to wait. He tried to rise to thoughts in keeping with the situation, but he found that he was cold and listless. His chief worry was Agatha. He had heard stories about the first child and the danger to the mother's life. As these came back to him they did not make him comfortable. The mute activity of the nurses passing in and out of the maternity room; the long absence of the physician; his own inexperience laid foundation for fears. As the hours passed he began to picture a crisis in the delivery room to which he was not made privy. Indifference to him of the nurses fed this suspicion. At last, unable to withstand the suspense any longer, he went toward the door behind which all his hopes lay hidden. He was met by the superintendent, tall, severe and unsympathetic.

"Yes?" She uttered the one word much as a kindergarten teacher would address a wayward youngster.

"Is—is everything going all right?"

"Certainly. Just the usual thing."

Dan snapped open his watch.

"It's been several hours," he said accusingly.

She looked at him witheringly.

"And it may be several more," she answered, as much as to say, "Oh, these fool young husbands!"

He feared to go out for a walk; he knew he did not care to eat. He went back to the seat in the hall—to wait.

He could get up no enthusiasm now for the baby. He realized that he did not care about it, and never had. It was Agatha in whom he was interested, and it was her apparent delight in the expected child that had aroused his own enthusiasm. Nothing must harm her.

He recalled that night long ago when they had sat in a park in St. Paul and talked about having children.

How sure she was then that she would never have children. How eager she was today to go through what she had called a "disgusting business." It was a disgusting business. He had seen enough to know that, yet she was eager to face it. He smiled tenderly as he remembered her. . . .

"It's a boy, Mr. Minturn." The superintendent was regarding him with a look which in anybody else would have been a smile, but in her was only a dazzle in the eyes.

"His mother will be glad," he said, trying to steady his voice and appear unconcerned. He followed her down the hall to the room of mystery, where he saw his child, a form, blinking, groping, pitiful, which seemed scarcely yet alive.

At once he understood that his world had changed. Its center had mysteriously shifted. He was thinking of Agatha as the baby's mother.

He saw her. She saw him. She smiled wanly. He knelt beside her bed. He noticed the moist hair, the little lines of pain about the mouth and between the eyes, and froth-flecks on her full lips, and he pitied her.

"Oh, my dear, my dear," he said.

"I'm so happy," she answered. "Is he all right? Did you see him? I'm happy." She murmured drowsily. He kissed her pale hands. . . .

He went out and ate a beefsteak. He walked the streets. All romance of parenthood burst upon him suddenly. He went about belligerently. At the club he hung round the lobby. He hoped that his acquaintances would accost him and inquire about his wife, so that he could deliver himself of the great news. Alas! they seemed strangely apathetic. They acted as if having a baby was an every-day experience. Swine! He played a game of solitaire and went to bed. . . .

The next morning as he strode into the hospital, a privileged caller, he was met in the hall by Dr. Goldman.

"Your baby is a little sick," the doctor said, with eyes unwilling to meet his own.

"Seriously?"

"Anything is serious in a day-old baby, Senator. No one can say he has a baby until it is three weeks old, you know."

Dan felt the blood leave his face. He braced himself for the acceptance of the worst—anything. But Agatha . . . Out of the past materialized a picture of the anguished face of the mother he had met with Dr. Joyce one sweltering day years ago. . . . But Agatha.

"You had better tell your wife."

Dan heard these words resentfully. They seemed a cruel sentence—needless—imposed by a heartless and whimsical judge.

He went for a walk determinedly. His mind refused to accept the idea that the baby would die. It was too monstrously cruel too inordinately wasteful.

Still on Agatha most of his thoughts ran. The child whom he scarcely had seen seemed of little importance beside her. How poignant her disappointment would be. . . . How should he tell her?

He went back to the hospital and stole into her room. She was asleep. A smile played about her lips. . . . He clenched his hands. He could not tell her.

In the hall he sat down dejectedly. He remembered that it was but a few hours before that he had sat there, pleasantly expectant. And now! It was impossible. The doctors could do something. They had to do something. He would spend thousands and thousands of dollars and bring specialists from Rochester, Chicago, New York. The child must live.

He went to find Dr. Goldman.

"Dr. Goldman," he said. "I want you to get the best medical talent in the United States to come here and look at the baby. Perhaps they can operate or something."

Dr. Goldman turned his serious eyes upon Senator Minturn.

"I'll do whatever you want done," he said. "We are doing all we can. I think you ought to know that no baby the age of yours can withstand an operation. All we can do is to wait. Perhaps the child is malformed. In that case nothing can help it. We shall know soon. . . . I should tell your wife if I were you."

Dan went out blanched. He paced up and down the hall trying to regain composure. After a while he went into Agatha's room with an air of exaggerated cheerfulness.

She was awake.

"You look like a funeral, sir. How dare you bring your wife such a face?"

He tried to smile. Then he forgot all his fine plans to disguise the ugly news and blurted out the truth.

"Baby is sick."

She understood in a flash. There was no need for him to say more. . . . She began to cry softly.

He grew argumentative. He tried to show her that if the child had to die it was better that it die now before they had grown to care for it. He had calculated without a woman's heart. She did not heed him. He sounded like a brute. She lay murmuring, "I want him so; I want him so." Dan took her hand. He ceased his babble. He was quieter now. He looked down into her eyes. He tried to help her. . . . Oh, the pity of it!

Three days passed—bitter days. Dan did not leave the hospital except for a few hours at night, when he went to the club to sleep—fretfully—near the telephone. The third night a summons came. As he took up the receiver he trembled.

"This is Miss Bibbs, Mrs. Minturn's nurse——"

"Yes, yes."

"Your baby is much better, Senator Minturn. I thought you would want to know at once."

He sank down gratefully on the bed, glad that no one was there to witness his emotion.

Wilfred Gaylard Minturn thrived after that, but about him hung an unexampled light of death. His parents never could behold his sturdy little frame without experiencing an inward tremor of fear. He was dearer to them—more pathetic—for having been brought back from death to them.

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Yet in time the child did not bring Dan complete contentment. There was a still unsatisfied inner ache.

CHAPTER XX

GOVERNOR MINTURN

THE Minturns followed the summer caravan out of the city to the North Shore. They chose a Canadian port where they had not only escape from heat of the town, but found glamour and romance of a foreign land. Here on the broad verandah of the Prince Charles they sat and watched the flow of summer life over the links, to the beach, and back again to the foyer, from foyer back to links and beach. The long sweep of shore-line like the curve of a young moon; the graceful pavilion on the links, where a band played Viennese waltzes, and American ragtime; the procession of golfers, bathers, women in flowered dresses, soldiers, diplomats, members of the mounted police, American business men, and youth in blazers and flannels; the endless traffic on the lake, swift trim passenger steamers, and gray, lumbering freighters, barges and trawlers—these made the scene gay with varied life and color. These furnished a milieu into which Agatha plunged happily after a long, enforced sojourn at home. To Dan, however, it gave only subject for satisfying his insatiable gusto for seeing things. He never could feel himself a part of this life. He looked on.

By night in the ball room, down the magnificently sculptured stairway, passed graceful bobbed-haired feminine figures, emanating breaths of illusive perfumes, and concealing beneath the swathing line of velvet and brocade wraps, smart gowns fashioned by Paquin or Patou. The Prince Charles allowed itself to be known as the "Bar Harbor of the West."

On the verandah, one afternoon, shortly before their

departure for home (Agatha would allow herself only three weeks from Wilfred), she and Dan parted, she to swim, and he to "get up his correspondence." (Business had to be attended to despite vacation).

As he turned away, Agatha let her eyes rest tenderly on his retreating figure. He had grown thinner, grayer. He was easily the handsomest and most distinguished man in all that company, as he was the tallest and best dressed.

"He surely has learned to wear clothes," she thought with a little twinge of pride.

For a moment, her mind fled back over the years to the day by the river, when the eager boy, Representative Daniel Minturn, first forced his way into her mind.

"My stars, what a sight he was," she inwardly commented. "That store suit that let his dangling arms through; those shiny elbows; that patent tie." She could not help smiling.

What a figure he will be as governor. And what a future he has, senator, mayhap, president. The prospect made her a little breathless.

As he disappeared into the writing room, she felt not only as a mother toward him, but as an artist who views with high satisfaction her own greatest production. . . .

Instead of proceeding at once to his writing, Minturn sat with his pen in hand watching the passing show. He found as many do find, that stimulation of the senses excites to reverie and speculation. So it was that as he sat and pondered, he began to compose a letter to Rakov, at Singapore.

Dear Rakov:

"A strange thought struck me just now; what if my mother in her cotton dress should walk across the crowded lobby of the Prince Charles? Or what if I, the printer of Hornbloom & Glanz, intruded among these gay folk in my overalls? Amusing.

"Often as I sit here scanning these faces, some exquisitely lovely, some showily painted, some sleek, some hard, I wonder if these faces hide the same awful inner emptiness that my own face does. Rakov, I'm stale, old motiveless, you would say—"

He broke off writing repelled by what he saw he had set down on the crested letterhead of the Prince Charles. He got up, sauntered out upon the lawn, and turning his back on the crowds, struck up the lake shore. Here after a while, he lost himself among the dunes, completely shut out from the noise of the hotel and the town. He sat down on the sand. . . .

§

And it came to him that man had some relation to nature—to stones and shingle, and to the unsalted waters that rocked to the rhythm of the earth. He had never felt that personal relationship before, a thing of cities as he had been. There was something very ancient and honorable in the pebble he kicked with his toe, and something stupendous and awful in the sea that laughed in the sunlight. The earth was old, immeasurably old, and mankind, but a hirsute bloom upon it.

As he thought on these things, he came to thinking of his own son, and through him to the interminable generations of men moving to the slow accompaniment of the earth's changes, moving in travail. Pain, pestilence, catastrophe, hunger, when had these not been? And now, in the cities which men had built, the eternal blight of black poverty. There was something solemn in man's procession throughout the ages. There was something depressing in the sight of blood brothers soaking the good green earth and darkening the waters with each other's blood. How petty, how ineffably mean men were in the light of their ancient origin, and how painful their descent from that distant source.

It came over him now with a measure of vividness that there had been and was some special intent in the projection of these human mimes out of that nature into this individual independence. He was warm with the idea; it rang in his brain, as the surf's clangor rang in his ears.

The air was sentient with drama. All the battles of life thrilled round this point—advancement or defeat. The great drift of the universe. Life flowing away or melting toward this settled determination!

As these things came to him out of the void of his own inner emptiness, he saw a chance for pattern, design, motif in human life, all men's and his own. This chaos was but the assembled materials out of which the comely might arrive . . .

His old life fell away from him as something outworn and mean. All the getting and spending; the plotting and scheming; the quick susceptibility of the senses to ease and comfort; the disgusting abundance of the rich and terrifying lack of the poor, the biting struggle of class against class—these seemed unworthy and infinitely petty.

It was but natural that under the spell of this overmastering idea he should measure his own life. He did not feel shame or remorse. There was no superstitious readiness to blame, or revulsion against self. Yet he knew himself a failure. The blood-lust that drove him to fight with Hugh and brought permanent estrangement; neglect of his mother; his overweening ambition for power; and the hours in which he placed individual desire above the common cause seemed dishonorable and perfidious—ugly discords in a pattern which otherwise gave promise of beauty.

He understood better now the effect upon himself of Hugh's deep antipathy. It was not that Hugh no longer treated him as a brother—far more to be dreaded—that Hugh treated him as though he no longer were a human

being. He suddenly saw there was something in all of us—some deep, abiding sentiment—a loyalty to a common humanity, and that it was the capitulation of this high inner citadel that wrecked a man—even as he himself was wrecked. . . .

Even as he himself was wrecked. That was true. Every act in his life that left its sting behind was accounted for in a moment when he had outraged this inward loyalty to men, his own essential humanness. The discovery left him grave.

Tumultuous thoughts, which were more like visions than thoughts, carried him forward as upon a tide, and brought exhilaration in their wake. . . .

He took from his pocket the letter he had written to Rakov and slowly tore it to bits. Then he began to write again, trying to recapture all that he had been thinking.

"If we could only grasp the intent of nature; if we could only learn to cooperate with it and with each other . . ."

Again he ceased writing. That was not it. He could not set it down. No one would ever know. He crumpled the paper in his fist. He watched the breeze crinkle the sand. . . .

His son came to mind again. The boy would have to go on after a time without his father's help. He would have to plunge into the tumultuous human scene, be assaulted by the same forces, know love—defeat? . . . With certainty he knew that he wanted Wilfred to take a different course from his own, to be a soldier in a different army . . . As for himself, he had to go on. . . .

§

Agatha was waiting on the piazza when he returned, a lithe, trim figure in a sea-green gown. She was smiling.

"Well," she asked, "you were gone a long time. Whom did you meet, sir? Was she dark or fair?"

"I met an old red-head, with a big mouth, and an awful temper—a married woman, too."

"I'm hungry. It is a wonder you wouldn't take me in to tea, Governor Minturn."

Her eyes were merry. She was contemplating him proudly, possessively. To her surprise, she saw a shadow cross his face, and he grew stern.

"Not that, please, Agatha."

"But you are governor, silly."

She took from her bodice an envelope.

"That came just now. I opened it." Her eyes were aflame.

He read:

"Caucus here unanimously indorses you for governor.

"Election sure.

GOODNITE."

He smiled slowly, ironically. Agatha smiled, too. He was thinking of the change in him that made this event inconsequential—nothing. She was thinking of the joy he must feel at his triumph.

"Oh, Dan, I'm so glad."

"I suppose you are, dear," he answered wearily.

Beyond the pavilion and the links, beyond the beach with its colorful stir of life, he saw the lake tossing in the sunshine.

They went in to tea.

NIGHT

Night came down. Night stretched its cloak of shadows over the world of men, erasing outlines, melting distinctions into an all-encompassing oneness. Night swept through city streets. It hid the pain on the face of the beggar in the alley. It made rough the way of old women, beshawled, turning from work. It mantled the sky with clouds that thieves, lovers, and women of joy might walk unafraid. It caught sparkle of lights on miles of boulevards. Night looked in at windows on ballrooms brilliant, heavy and languorous, on bedrooms where children knelt in prayer; on men in hotels holding silent vigils; on hospital beds where patients tossed in delirium. Night came down, and blotted out the marks of day. It enveloped happy homes, and spread a pall over fields. Night came down on the sea—the watery spaces—and brought its stars.

